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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

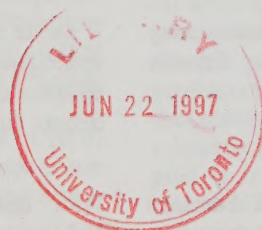
Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 18 June 1997

Mercredi 18 juin 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 18 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 18 juin 1997

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### DAVE SHANNON

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I am proud today to stand in the House and tell all the members of the Legislature about a Canadian hero who hails from Thunder Bay.

Dave Shannon is a poet, an actor, a lawyer and a remarkable advocate for the disabled community in our country. As a result of an accident in 1981, Dave became a quadriplegic. His achievements since then have been an inspiration to thousands of people, but his latest challenge may be his most remarkable yet.

On April 1st Dave began a cross-Canada tour in his wheelchair to promote education and research for persons with disabilities. He has now arrived in Toronto and all of us in the Legislature will have an opportunity to meet with him later this afternoon.

What we will learn is that Dave believes there is no barrier that cannot be crossed, regardless of one's circumstances. He will tell us that creative thinking and appropriate support systems can combine to bring one past virtually any barrier. He will also tell us that our society, with awareness and partnerships, can continue towards justice, civility and equality for all.

But in order for Dave to reach those goals, we must do our part as well. As legislators, we must recognize that supporting Dave and the millions of people he represents requires this government to bring forward its Ontarians with Disabilities Act that it has so long promised, so that equal treatment for those with disabilities will be a reality and not a dream.

I am proud to call Dave Shannon a friend. All of us in Thunder Bay are eagerly awaiting his arrival back home on July 28th. Let's support his cause by taking some needed action right now.

### COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT IN HAMILTON

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I rise today to thank the members from all parties of the regulations and private bills committee who this morning supported unanimously my bill, Bill Pr51, An Act respecting the City of Hamilton. By virtue of their action today, that bill will now be brought to the House for consideration by all of us, and I hope it will receive the same type of all-party support here that it received at committee.

The essence of the bill is that, for the first time ever in any community in the history of Ontario, a municipality will now have the ability to provide grants and loans in community improvement areas, not just to the owners of the properties but also to the tenants. In many cases we've seen the unwillingness of some property owners to take on the responsibility of these loans, thereby denying the long-term commercial tenant an opportunity to participate in improving their property, improving the area, making the business a going concern, which benefits all of us.

We have a number of community improvement areas in Hamilton. We have some money made available by our municipal council. By virtue of this House supporting the committee recommendation to pass my bill, the city of Hamilton will again show leadership in community renewal, in community building and assisting small business, which is vital for all our cities.

### SIMCOE ECONOMY

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I had the privilege last Thursday of welcoming the Premier of Ontario to the town of Simcoe in my riding of Norfolk. He was there to open the expansion of the Unilever Good Humour-Breyers ice cream plant, which is known locally as the ice cream factory. This was a very important event for the town of Simcoe as the plant employs 400 people and is the largest private sector employer in town.

This opening is an example of what's happening right across Ontario. This government is building a climate of confidence in Ontario which allows the private sector to do what it does best: create jobs. By creating an investment-friendly atmosphere, places like Simcoe benefit. Simcoe is now the largest manufacturer of ice cream products in North America. The plan is working, a plan that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation to create a foundation for opportunity and prosperity, a plan whose goal is to make Ontario the best place in the world to live, work, invest and raise a family.

I wish to thank Premier Harris for his visit and also to thank the Unilever company for their expression of confidence in the town of Simcoe and the people who live there. On a more personal note, both my daughter and the Premier's son had a delicious tour of the ice cream plant. The opening also involved children from St Mary's school, which is located just around the corner.

### SUDBURY ECONOMY

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'd like to inform the House today of a strong partnership between the government of Malaysia and the people of Sudbury. Last week



a Malaysian delegation was in Sudbury to forge a vibrant partnership involving technology transfer with the Northern Centre for Advanced Technology from Cambrian College. This group and the Malaysian government conducted an international design competition for the design of five laboratory buildings.

I'm very happy and proud to announce that the architectural firm of Nicholls Yallowega Belanger from Sudbury and Ellis-Pastore from Sault Ste Marie are the successful candidates and have been commissioned to ensure that these buildings become reality. It is reassuring to know that countries from around the world realize the excellence found in northern Ontario. It is a lesson indeed this government can learn.

I congratulate Mr Ti, Puan Paute, Mr Choong and Mr Poh on their selection. I also congratulate Rick Yallowega and Dave Ellis for their accomplishments. Your northern roots will help you make your mark on the international architectural landscape. These labs will house testing needs which include drinking water, air samples, industrial and municipal waste and surveillance of the industrial workplace. Indeed we can learn from the Malaysian priorities.

1340

#### AIR QUALITY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Since taking on the environment portfolio on behalf of the NDP caucus, I've been pushing this government to do something positive about air quality. One of the first actions they made was to lift the NDP ban on waste incineration, a move that only makes our air quality worse. Then they cut funding for public transit, at the same time gutting planning legislation certain to create more urban sprawl and greater reliance on the car. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Last year when I asked the previous minister about government plans to help control smog, I got answers like: "We're exploring our options." She told one reporter that she didn't like the idea of vehicle emissions testing because people want government "out of their face."

For a while it seemed that my efforts and those of Pollution Probe, the Lung Association and others were starting to pay off. This minister seemed somewhat committed to vehicle emissions testing. But as summer approaches and the brown cloud threatens our cities yet again, we see no action — nothing but talk and vague reassurances: "Yes, be patient. We're looking at options."

Please, Minister, you keep telling us that smog kills almost 2,000 people a year in Ontario. That is unacceptable and it is something we can do something about. Will you stop talking, get to work and bring in a mandatory vehicle emissions testing program, and will you announce that today?

#### KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** Mr Speaker and fellow members of the Legislature, I rise today to invite all of you to join with Canada's Korean War veterans and their families as they dedicate the Korean veterans' Wall of Remembrance in Brampton.

On July 27 this dream of Canada's Korean War veterans will finally become a reality. After working towards this event for the past 40 years, they will now see the dedication of a national memorial for all Canadians, particularly those who lost their lives in the Korean conflict.

The forgotten war, as it is known, helped secure the future of a democratic, stable and economically sound South Korea. To preserve and protect this nation and the ideas of peace and democracy, 516 Canadians gave their lives. To remember those brave men and women who gave their lives across the world for our country and an ideal, it is only fitting that we recognize their efforts with a monument to their courage and dedication.

On Sunday, July 27, at 11:30 am everyone is invited to Meadowvale Cemetery in Brampton to remember Canadian veterans, particularly those who fell in battle in the Korean conflict. All veterans, their next of kin and their families are invited to register for the Wall and may do so by phoning 1-888-381-BRAMPTON.

This Wall of Remembrance was built entirely with private donations and serves as a reminder that we cannot forget those who served our nation and that, as a community working together, we can accomplish goals we all believe in.

#### SCHOOL CURRICULUM

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** People in the front lines of the Toronto Board of Education made it clear today that they will not be teaching students the new curriculum this fall — will not because they cannot.

This curriculum has been rushed through with virtually no consultation with teachers. It has been dumped on schools at the end of June, with no time for teachers to work together to put this in place for September, let alone get any training they might need.

But even more astounding is that the government has been in such a hurry to make a political statement with its curriculum that it has not taken time to put any curriculum materials in place to back up their new guidelines.

How can teachers teach without curriculum materials? How can students learn if they have no textbooks with their new curriculum in it? How can they pass a test if their workbooks don't let them practise what they're supposed to know at the end of the year?

Once again the Mike Harris government is ramming its agenda through without taking time to get the basics right. None of this is about helping students to achieve. This is all about the backroom boys who rewrote this curriculum, who couldn't care less about how well it works, who just want to make a political statement and get on with it as fast as possible and who are doing it at the expense of students. Yes, we need good curriculum, well taught, well learned. We need a government that takes time to get it right.

#### LABOUR ISSUES

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** The Harris Tories at Queen's Park demonstrate a sustained disinterest in the continuing high, double-digit levels of unemploy-



ment across this province; in the Niagara region alone, levels of unemployment of 10.9% and almost double that for young people under the age of 25.

This government at the same time demonstrates an obsession for the very worst of the southern United States, like Arkansas and Florida, those so-called right-to-work states where minimum wages are virtually non-existent and where low-wage economies don't sustain small business or service industries and force working people into ever lower levels of poverty.

What this government doesn't dare do through the front door it's attempting to do through the back door. The failed Bill 131 is being emulated now by another Tory backbencher who, by a resolution that's to be debated on June 26 this year in this Legislature, wants to suggest that somehow the mode, the hard-won right of trade unions in the workplace to collect fees, dues, from their members, is somehow undemocratic.

This government, with its jackboot tactics in this Legislature for two years now, has increased utilization of time allocation in its stifling of debate, and now the implementation, with no consultation and no negotiation, of rule changes that will limit debate in the most serious manner shows no regard for democracy and no regard for working people. New Democrats are going to oppose that resolution, just like we opposed Bill —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I am very proud to rise in the House today to acknowledge that June is Stroke Awareness Month.

The Ministry of Health, in accordance with our visions of providing integrated, patient-focused health care services, supports the concept of coordinated stroke care for patients in Ontario. Recognizing the enormous cost of strokes on individuals and their families, our government has undertaken several initiatives to prevent stroke and improve care for stroke care patients.

The ministry has already expanded services like CAT scans and MRI services and is developing integrated strategies for rehabilitation. In fact, 66 hospitals now have CAT scans in Ontario and we're tripling the number of MRI services in operation in the province from 12 to 35, one of which is due for the Niagara Peninsula in St Catharines by April 1998. We are also proud of federal approval of a new drug we're expecting, which if approved will improve outcomes for some types of stroke patients.

The ministry has developed a five-year provincial heart health program to address the three key risk factors associated with cardiovascular disease, including stroke, like tobacco use prevention, healthy eating and nutrition and increasing levels of physical activity. The Heart and Stroke Foundation has agreed in principle to be a partner with the province in this program. This is good news for Ontarians because of their expertise in these areas.

I am very proud too that the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Niagara will have endeavoured to educate the residents and health professionals alike by providing information about early diagnosis, prevention, recovery and treatment options.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** It's time for oral questions — the official opposition.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier, who we do not see yet in the House so we will be standing down.

**The Speaker:** Second question? Stand both of them down?

**Mr Phillips:** Stand down.

**The Speaker:** First question, the third party? Leader of the third party?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** The Minister of Health is not here, the Premier is not here, so I'm not sure who we can ask the question of either.

**The Speaker:** The Premier's coming.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Premier, and it's on the shooting death of a first nations person at Ipperwash and the government's role in that. We know there are many unanswered questions about the government's role in this tragedy. These can only be answered by a public inquiry.

The Liberal caucus feels the key to unlocking what happened at Ipperwash rests with the Premier's records. Your trusted long-time adviser and executive assistant, Deb Hutton, attended high-level meetings on your behalf the day before the shooting, the day of the shooting and each day for several weeks after. However, you have told us that never once from September 1 to October 1, 1995, did she ever prepare any briefing note, any file or any summary for you. Premier, is this normal operating procedure for your office, that the Premier's executive assistant would attend critical meetings daily and never prepare for the Premier a note, a file or a briefing summary?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** None of the meetings were our meetings or her meeting or my office meeting or the cabinet office meeting or the Premier's office meeting. So while there were minutes kept, they would be as a result of the lead ministries in this. Native affairs I think had the lead on it. The Attorney General, the minister responsible, can report on that. Those minutes would have been kept and I think have been made available as appropriate through any of the freedom of information requests for those it was deemed appropriate to have them.

1350

**Mr Phillips:** Imagine the suspicion the people of Ontario have. This was a shooting taking place shortly after you became Premier, the first time a first nations person had been killed in a confrontation with the government, a major crisis. Your executive assistant, your long-time, trusted adviser, Deb Hutton, was there on your behalf every single day, often for three hours, at these meetings. Then your trusted assistant would come back and brief you.

Are you saying that never once in that whole month did she ever write a note, a file, a summary, a briefing note? Are you saying today that you never once asked her to write down for you what took place at those



meetings and what advice she had for you? You're saying Deb Hutton never once wrote a memo or a file or a briefing note to you?

**Hon Mr Harris:** We are going back over a year and a half ago. I know there were minutes kept by others who hosted the meetings and were responsible for that. I don't recall ever seeing a briefing note or a file from Ms Hutton. She would brief verbally and use what minutes were kept by others who were responsible for doing that.

**Mr Phillips:** I think the public can understand our suspicion. The Premier is saying that for an entire month his senior staff, on perhaps the gravest crisis facing the government, never wrote the Premier a file, a briefing note, a memo. There is clearly a need for a public inquiry.

Amnesty International said today, not yesterday, today: "We've got grave concerns that major human rights violations took place at Ipperwash in 1995. The way, we feel, to address that is to hold a full and public inquiry so people can see, you know, what happened that night." That's what they said today.

We now have a legal opinion by three lawyers indicating that there are, in their language, "no legal impediments to the government of Ontario ordering the immediate commencement of a public judicial inquiry into the incident at Ipperwash." Premier, if we are able to prove that, are you prepared today to order a full public judicial inquiry into the tragedy at Ipperwash?

**Hon Mr Harris:** We've been very clear on this. We've made public, certainly, all of our role in this. The only decision I recall being made was to seek a civil injunction from the whole matter. Other than that, there's been no real involvement other than being informed and relaying whatever information was appropriate to the public. That's all a matter of public record. We've indicated that when all of the criminal matters and judicial matters going before the court are there and nothing could be prejudiced by that, if at that time further information is required, we'd be happy to do that in the appropriate way.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Premier, you've gained a reputation, as you well know, for refusing to tolerate opposition, whether it's from the public, from members of your own party or from we who happen to sit on this side of the House. I want you to understand that with your rule changes you're going one step too far.

You are simply and effectively about to severely limit the opportunity for full and thorough debate of important public policy. You are about to limit not only our right as members of the opposition to engage in debate but the right of the media to keep our public informed and for our public to gain a good understanding of what goes on inside this chamber.

Premier, good governments listen and learn from listening. Will you please, in the interests of democracy in Ontario, withdraw your rule changes?

*Applause.*

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the applause. The House leader will be pleased to answer.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Contrary to the statements made, this government has listened long and hard to the people of Ontario. We've had public hearings on quite a number of issues, public hearings on many bills that have come back. Hours and hours, days and days of public hearings have helped shaped the legislation that has gone through the Legislature of Ontario.

I'm pleased to say that the House leaders have had extensive meetings on the proposed House procedures. I believe there's a spirit of goodwill and I think that over the next week we will find a new set of House procedures that will be to the satisfaction of all three parties. That certainly is my goal.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you know full well that your rule changes are going to effectively silence the opposition in this Legislature. You know, as well, that you wouldn't even attempt to do this if you didn't think you could get away with it. The fact that you introduced these changes under cover of a federal election day is most telling in this issue.

Opposition is not something you can merely sweep away. It is an integral component of a healthy and vibrant parliamentary democracy. You have a neat and tidy mind, Premier, and that is a dangerous thing in a democracy. We are not merely some kind of obstacle you can overcome, some kind of bump in the road you can run over. I ask you one more time: Will you withdraw your rule changes?

**Hon David Johnson:** We certainly have no intention of withdrawing the rule changes, but we have every intention of negotiating and discussing with the other two parties. I find it somewhat interesting that many of the rule changes that are involved we have actually taken from the federal Legislature.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** Apparently, in the federal Legislature, Prime Minister Chrétien and the members of the House find that the changes, many of which we are attempting to implement here, allow for more members to be involved in the debate, allow for more time for debate, allow for more time for private members' business, and I would suggest to you are more democratic and allow the members of the House to serve the people of Ontario or Canada in a superior fashion.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, sir, you should understand that these rules have been developed over centuries by parliamentarians who understood only too well that in a healthy, vibrant democracy not only does the government have the right to govern, but the opposition has the right and indeed the obligation to oppose. We are Her Majesty's loyal opposition. When we act, we act in the public interest. What you are about to do, Premier, is to take this rule book and put your stamp on it. I want to tell you that it is completely unacceptable to me, to my caucus and to the people of this province, and I'm not going to put up with it.



Here's your book. Here are your rules. They're not mine.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Government House leader.

1400

**Hon David Johnson:** I will say in response to the opposition party, which has chosen to leave the House, that in 1989 the government at that time, now the opposition, the Liberal Party of the province of Ontario, brought in rule changes, brought in House procedural changes. At that point Sean Conway was quoted. He indicated, "We felt we were facing a pattern of obstructionism that was really making this place somewhat less effective and less efficient than the people of Ontario expect it to be." That was his quote in 1989. They brought in rule changes.

In 1992, the government, now the third party, brought in rule changes. This government is proposing and has been involved in a negotiated process to bring in rule changes. I hope that those negotiations will be fruitful, that we can all get together and determine appropriate rules to make this place work better for the people of the province of Ontario, and I firmly believe that we can do that.

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the Premier, and I want you to know, Speaker, that we are equally upset about these proposed rule changes because, in our view, they do threaten democracy in this province.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Premier, my question has to do with the Amnesty International report released today. The report covers worldwide human rights violations and for the first time, certainly in my memory, it raises an issue in Ontario. It raises the issue concerning the death of Dudley George at Ipperwash.

The researcher for the report says there are still many questions that need to be answered. We agree with some of his questions: "How did the situation come about? Who was in control? Why wasn't it defused in a peaceful manner?"

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Hampton:** Premier, Amnesty International has asked you and we are asking you again, will you hold a full public inquiry into this so these questions can be —

**The Speaker:** Premier.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Mr Speaker, I know the Attorney General can respond.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** We've made it very clear that legal matters are currently before the courts that must be completed before any other options can be considered. It would be premature to make a decision or to comment further while these matters remain before the courts. Certainly I can add that the characterization of Amnesty International I think is incorrect and I disagree with it. I take some comfort in the fact that they are reviewing the way they did the report and the conclusions that they made.

**Mr Hampton:** Amnesty is not reviewing the report. What they note is that Acting Sergeant Deane has been convicted of a crime in respect of this death but that does not change the need for a public inquiry to get to the bottom of the issues, and that's what your government tries to avoid. You don't want to answer questions as to how someone died. What were the events that led up to this?

You're trying to hide behind a criminal investigation but, Mr Attorney General, the Supreme Court of Canada has already held that in this type of situation, and they refer to the Westray mine situation, a public inquiry can go ahead.

So perhaps you can answer this for people: Why can a public inquiry go ahead in the province of Nova Scotia, yet you cannot hold a public inquiry here in the same sort of factual scenario in the province of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The prudent course and the clear course is that legal matters that are presently before the courts must be completed. That is the wise and prudent course to take. That is the course that we indicated very clearly we would take and that is what we will do. When those legal matters are completed, we will review other options.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** There are too many unanswered questions that remain in the Ipperwash events. The refusal of the government to hold a public inquiry continues to poison the atmosphere. It's creating a very difficult situation and making a bad situation even worse.

Lawyers for the George family today held a press conference in Ottawa. I'd like to quote briefly from a legal opinion they presented at that press conference.

"There was a deliberate political decision by the Ontario government to use violence against the protesters in the park. That decision was made at a very high level, and quite possibly by the Premier personally. We believe that this political decision to use force against native rights protestors was a critical factor in the death of Dudley George."

You must have an inquiry that deals with all the events that led to the tragic death of this unarmed man. Will the government now do what is the right thing, seek the truth through a full public inquiry that does not in any way impinge on further court decisions?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** That is a question that we have answered many times. I want to say that there has been no refusal, as the member poses in his question. Options remain open.

The one thing I want to take issue with is that there was a decision by this government. The decision by the government was a decision to seek a civil injunction. That was the course the government took. It has been reiterated time and again by the chief of the Ontario Provincial Police that there was no political involvement whatsoever in determining police actions. Quite simply, those are the facts and that is the history of this matter.

**The Speaker:** New question. Leader of the third party.

#### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the Minister of Health. Have you made a



decision to close the Queen Street Mental Health Centre and turn over its operations and assets to some other body?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** No.

**Mr Hampton:** Perhaps the Minister of Health can explain this. This is a copy of a work plan for the creation of something called the Addiction and Mental Health Services Corp for the amalgamation of the Clarke Institute, Donwood and the Addiction Research Foundation and the takeover of Queen Street by this new entity. The work plan indicates that this process will be complete by September. Page 9 indicates clearly that the new corporation will, by the end of September, be in a position to acquire Queen Street.

Minister, your hospital commission has yet to release its final report on Metro. It is supposed to be making final decisions based on public input. We hear through the grapevine that the commission may not release its final decisions until September, yet apparently you've already got a process under way to start this new corporation. Can you explain how this can be happening behind closed doors, without public input?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The honourable member has to be the last person in the province to know about this process. It's been a very public process. In fact, there were protests a couple months ago in front of this building when your party and others went out and said we'd be closing beds at Queen Street. The process is driven by the Clarke, by the Donwood, by the ARF and by Queen Street. They're trying to get together in terms of governance to be more efficient. They're having discussions, which I think is a very healthy thing. They're all in similar businesses, yet they've run separate institutions for years. We assured them that if they come up with some agreement and it's consistent with the Health Services Restructuring Commission — the commission is fully aware of it, as is everybody else in the province who has an interest in these areas — it's a very positive set of discussions that are going on, and they're being driven by the local area, not by the Ministry of Health.

1410

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Minister, in addition to the report we have, we also have a copy of your ministry's letter to Duncan Sinclair, the chair of the HSRC. On page 3 of that Ms Mottershead says: "We believe it is essential that the community services be established ahead of the downsizing and decentralizing and that all resources currently utilized in the delivery of mental health services be retained in the restructured mental health system."

Yet, even though you're questioning the recommendations in that initial report in terms of bed numbers, in terms of the community services — your own ministry is doing that — here you've gone ahead with an implementation report when the commission has not even reported. Minister, you really have a lot to answer for when you have talked about how this system has integrity when you are going ahead with an implementation plan that's to be in place in September when the restructuring commission has not even released its report. How many severely mentally ill people at Queen Street are going to be thrown into the street?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** None. We've reversed the trend of the previous two governments, and not one mental health service has been cut by this government. We've increased mental health services in your own community, on Queen Street, we've put a moratorium on the closure of beds. You closed hundreds of beds in the province and people went out on the street. That was the history of the last 10 years. We put a moratorium on: no beds to close.

These discussions among four institutions are driven by the four institutions. I've not personally been involved in them at all. The commission is fully aware. It has met with the parties involved. They're trying to get their governance and administration streamlined and share resources so there will be more money available for front-line mental health services, a very positive move and one you should be applauding, not condemning.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question for the Premier in regard to the rule changes his government has brought forward, supposedly for discussion, on federal election day.

I want to refer to what happened in this House yesterday and juxtapose that with comments made in 1992 by the Premier's colleague the Minister of Finance, when he was House leader for the third party. The member for Parry Sound said at that time that if any government proceeded unilaterally with rule changes in this place, the assembly would become a very acrimonious place. He also said that rule changes of that sort would not work, that unless there was trust and respect among members in this House, the Legislature could not work.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Wildman:** With that in mind, you saw yesterday the reaction of the public to these changes, which they believe to be undemocratic. This is not just about reducing the rights of members, it's about the public and their right to have input into legislation. Two months ago we held up your megacity legislation to give the public a chance for a fair debate. Do you think the public should be shut out of public debate, as your rule changes will do?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** No, of course, and that's why this government has had more public involvement, pre- and post-introduction of legislation, in the history of the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr Wildman:** These rule changes are about getting the government's agenda through quickly without proper scrutiny by the public or in this assembly. I predict, as the member for Parry Sound predicted, that this place will become even more acrimonious if you insist on proceeding in this way. We don't subscribe to the divine right of kings theory of government. The government must be scrutinized and criticized and must listen to the opposition. Why don't you do the democratic thing and withdraw these rule changes so we don't have the kinds of difficulties we're obviously now facing in this assembly?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I suggest to you that the rule changes being proposed are to facilitate the operation of the



Legislature and its committees to maximize the opportunities for debate by all members and to maximize the opportunities for input from the public. I suggest to you that they are consistent with the statement by the member for Cochrane South in 1992 that said:

"We're doing rule changes because it's very, very necessary to have rules that allow the legislation in this House to go through in a smooth and effective manner. When you've got opposition parties playing games, it is quite, quite, quite something."

The rule changes, which are quite reflective of other jurisdictions in Canada, particularly the federal House of Commons, are there —

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Harris:** — yes, to try and prevent using up hours and hours and hours and days and days of time in non-productive debate and replacing it with —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. You recently introduced new legislation to update the obsolete Game and Fish Act. This new bill, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, if passed by the Legislature, will increase wildlife protection in Ontario.

As you're aware, outdoor groups have long believed that effective management of fish and wildlife will provide huge environmental and economic benefits. Could you clarify for my constituents and for the outdoorspeople of Ontario what some of the proposed changes are under the new bill and what the rationale behind them is.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I'd like to thank the member for Oshawa for the question. I know he has a keen interest in this issue, as do many of his constituents.

I'm sure all members in the House would agree that the Game and Fish Act needs to be updated. This act hasn't been revised in more than 40 years. This new bill, if passed, will lead to improvements in a number of areas, including tougher enforcement of the game and fish laws and expanded protection of a number of species.

Let me speak first to the enhancement of the enforcement provisions. First of all, the new act, if passed, will dramatically increase fines for offences. For example, the maximum fine for commercial offences will be increased to \$100,000 and up to two years in jail from the previous maximum fine of \$25,000 and one year in jail.

Once passed, this bill will improve our ability to investigate offences. We're looking to give enforcement officers more time on cases, and —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** — the limitation period on prosecutions will be extended up to two years from the current six months, to give our officers more time to investigate the tougher cases. Tough enforcement —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr Ouellette:** As you know, the Toronto Star headline last Wednesday stated, "New Fish, Wildlife Act Tries to Protect Birds, Bears — and Hunters." There has been a great deal of concern expressed by citizens of this province as well as the Legislature about the protection of wildlife. Outdoor groups have long felt that this province's natural resources should receive effective long-term management.

The other reference in the headline concerned hunters. The treatment of hunters in Ontario is a concern of many of my constituents and a large number of outdoor groups throughout the province. Could you please clarify for these groups what this legislation is seeking to accomplish.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Again I'd like to thank the member for Oshawa for the insightful question. It's true the new bill includes an anti-harassment provision to protect hunters and anglers. In fact, Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions in North America that doesn't already have this type of protection in place. As many people in this House would know, this is an important step forward. It may not be of crucial importance to the third party, but it is important to most of the members in the province.

Essentially, our provisions would protect people who hunt and fish or trap from unwanted harassment. This measure would make it illegal to interfere with lawful hunting activity. It will make it illegal to damage traps or to scare wildlife away while someone is legally hunting.

This government recognizes the importance of the hunting and fishing heritage in this province. Just this past Saturday morning I was a guest on the Barclay's outdoor show, the radio program on the Fan 590. I was reminded of the valuable contribution —

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I'm answering, Mr Speaker; this is an important issue and it requires a bit of elaboration — the outdoors community makes to preserving our wilderness —

**The Speaker:** If you hadn't wasted that time, you could have got the answer out.

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## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the Premier. In your answer to my colleague the member for Algoma, you said your newly proposed rules would maximize the opportunity for public input. As we read the rules and as others have read them, your proposed changes would essentially allow you to ram legislation through here in four days. Can you tell me how that would maximize the opportunity for public input?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I know the House leader would be pleased to answer this.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** One provision, for example, at the federal level is that the lead speakers, rather than having 90 minutes, would have 40 minutes; subsequent speakers, rather than having 30 minutes, would have either 20 or 10. This allows many more speakers, many more members of the Legislature to



get involved in the debate. That's a provision in the federal Legislature whereby they feel that many more elected representatives get involved.

I have indicated that it has never been the intention of this government to ram legislation through and it's not the intention of this government to ram legislation through. I am certainly interested in negotiating with the opposition parties provisions whereby the length of time in the future, after the new changes, would be no shorter than the length of time as it exists presently.

**Mr Hampton:** My question was very clear. I asked about public input. We understand that your definition of democracy is that a government is elected and then it gets to do whatever it wants for four years. That's become very clear. It became clear with Bill 7, it became clear with Bill 26, it became clear with your attempts around the megacity. You simply wanted to ram through the legislation with no opportunity for the public to understand what was happening, with no opportunity for the public to respond to what you're proposing to do.

I asked you that question and your response was that you don't want to talk about the opportunity for the public. I put the question to you again. The text of the proposed rule changes would essentially shut the public out of the democratic process of passing legislation. The public would have no time to understand what is being proposed, the public would have no time to respond. That doesn't sound like democracy to me. Why are you trying to shut the public out of the democratic process with your rule changes?

**Hon David Johnson:** I wish to assure the leader of the third party that that's far from the factual situation. In fact, the rule procedures will allow for extra debate in this Legislature, will allow for bills to receive second reading. We have involved the general public far more than the previous government in terms of hearings in Toronto, in terms of travelling across the province. We have a record that's unmatched, certainly by the previous government, in terms of hours and days of public hearings. I can assure you here today that this government fully intends to involve the general public in the future as it has done in the past.

#### INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain):** My question is to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The minister is not — yes, she is. It's amazing how you knew she was coming, actually.

**Mr Pettit:** In the federal election of June 2, the people of Canada sent the Chrétien government back to Ottawa for a second mandate. During the previous mandate a number of key issues were discussed regarding a fair share for the provinces in certain areas of federal spending and on rebalancing certain areas of federal-provincial responsibility. Will you please tell my constituents high atop Hamilton Mountain and all Ontarians what expectations our government is putting on federal-provincial relations for the next mandate.

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** I'd like to answer the question from the member

for Hamilton Mountain by saying that we have had good working relationships at the intergovernmental level with the government in Ottawa and we are looking very much forward to even improved federal working relationships with it.

Since our government took office, there have been numerous constructive discussions. However, we've made it clear that we do have a couple of challenges in not receiving our fair share of funding. That's not new. In the case of training, we do not receive our fair share and, although in EI we give to the federal government net profit to them of \$4 billion, we have some work to do. Also, in the area of the CHST we're looking for our fair share. Over the next mandate of this particular federal government we will seek to redress these imbalances and we look forward to some success in this area.

**Mr Pettit:** Thank you, Minister. That's very positive. I believe it's important that we continue to pressure the federal government to ensure that the needs of the individual provinces are accounted for, and yet not at the expense of the federation. Will the interprovincial social policy council continue to work with the new government and the federal ministers responsible for social policy issues to ensure that Ottawa effectively meets the needs of the provinces and does not intrude into areas of provincial responsibility?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** We're extremely pleased that the Prime Minister saw fit to appoint to his cabinet some continuity with ministers, and I will say that we particularly enjoy working with the Minister of Human Resources, Mr Pierre Pettigrew. I'd also like to say that we look forward to the positive work of the social policy council.

It is continuing. I was in Calgary last week where we were discussing a number of items to do with — I might make it blunt from our point of view — children and jobs, and mechanisms to work better with our colleagues across the provinces and certainly with the federal government. This work will be presented to the premiers this summer at the annual premiers' conference in New Brunswick, and I will finish by saying that we are very much looking forward to continuing our work once again, to see some action at the Prime Minister's level with the premiers in this regard.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I have a question for the Chair of the Management Board. Minister, you got caught, didn't you? The Ontario Grievance Settlement Board said last week that your efforts to require private contractors to hire existing public service employees were a total sham. That was their ruling last week. As a matter of fact your privatization efforts have even violated your own agreement with OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union. Now you have to go back and redesign the whole process.

As I've asked you before in this place, will you, when you reopen those requests, assure us that all RFPs, requests for proposals, across the government contain a clause that guarantees disabled people will be hired when a service is privatized?



**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** There's a little bit of embellishment in terms of "a total sham," etc, but this is a normal Grievance Settlement Board process. There was an application to the Grievance Settlement Board regarding a contract that was put out in the Chatham area. A judgement was made involving the human resource factors for that particular contract. Yes, we're reviewing that situation and certainly the government will comply.

There is another grievance associated with the contract associated with the mail messenger services, so there's very little I can say about that particular situation other than that we have extended the closing for two months on that particular bid and we certainly will be looking at the judgement of the Grievance Settlement Board.

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**Mr Laughren:** I don't think we're asking for too much here. We're asking, in particular in regard to the mail room employees to whom you yourself refer, that when you extend the deadline for closing you simply build into the new — I don't know whether you're going to issue new requests for proposals or not; why would you extend the deadline unless you're going to do that? — that when do that, you ensure that the RFPs say that disabled people must be assured of employment with a new employer.

I think it was just last week that your Minister of Community and Social Services talked about the importance of bringing disabled people into the mainstream of society and she said, and I quote, "not to protect them but to work with them to realize their own potential." What better way of showing that you mean those words than to ensure that disabled people now in the employ of the government will be able to continue their employment if you privatize the service where they are now employed?

**Hon David Johnson:** The human resource factor was built into those situations whereby a piece of the corporation is contracted out, goes out to the private sector, so that the private sector would perform that sort of service. Through the process involving the Chatham contract, there have been questions raised about the human resource factor, whether it was sufficient or not, and the Grievance Settlement Board has made a decision in that regard.

It is an attempt to ensure that all employees, regardless of their situation, have a better opportunity to maintain employment under a private sector contract. We will be looking at it. We will certainly look at the Grievance Settlement Board's proposal, and I can assure that over the next period of time we'll be doing everything we can to comply in all contracts, including the mail messenger contract.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** My question is to Minister Ecker, the Minister of Community and Social Services. A recent article appeared in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record in my riding indicating that there was a requirement for single mothers with children over the age of three to participate in workfare. It goes

on to say that single fathers with children under three years of age are not exempt from workfare. Minister, is this a double standard? Could you clarify this article that appeared in the Record?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I thank the member for the opportunity to make sure that this has been clarified for those residents in Kitchener-Waterloo. Sole-support parents with school-age children, whether fathers or mothers, will be part of Ontario Works, our work-for-welfare program, and the reason we are doing that is because we believe they deserve the same opportunities as those singles on workfare to take advantage of the programs to get off welfare, to get into paid jobs, which is where most of them certainly want to be.

We have made sure that the rules are very flexible so that those parents with school-age children will be able to undertake their activities at the time the children are in school, and if indeed there needs to be child care, there are resources there that will help those parents with appropriate quality child care if they are needed.

**Mr Leadston:** Minister, you've shared with us the importance of assisting single parents back into the workforce and how you are helping to achieve that goal. What are doing and what is your ministry attempting to do for the young children in our communities that are caught in the system?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** There are two changes we are making, which we think will help young people and families. First, we are making mandatory the dental and vision benefits for a child if the family is on welfare. For many families on welfare those benefits were discretionary, whether the municipality chose to provide it or not. We are making those a mandatory program because we think that dental and health and vision benefits for children are extremely important, so that will be a mandatory service.

The other change we're making is that those 16- and 17-year-olds who have been able to leave the family home and obtain welfare will no longer be able to do that. If there are exceptional circumstances, of course, supports will be there as needed, but we want to make sure that a 16- and 17-year-old, if they're leaving the family home, has to be in school or in an appropriate training, educational, whatever, activity. They have to have adult supervision, and if there is indeed financial support that's required, it will go through a trustee. We don't think we should try and fix family problems —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. New question.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, contrary to public pronouncements you made and that junior minister Jackson made regarding full province-wide public hearings on your WCB attack called Bill 99, you have only allowed four half-days here in Toronto and six days for the rest of the province in the summer inter-session. Yet this is for a bill that completely replaces the WCB act that you have said is complex and far-reaching.



When we did Bill 49, your changes to the Employment Standards Act, which you said were minor and house-keeping in nature, you agreed to four full weeks of province-wide public hearings.

Knowing that there are hundreds and hundreds of groups and individuals that want an opportunity to speak to this bill that's going to have such a fundamental effect on their lives, how do you square such a few measly days on Bill 99 and yet four full weeks on Bill 49? How do you do that?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I think it's important to remember that when we were in opposition we had already put forward our plan for overhauling the WCB. What we are simply doing in Bill 99 is building on what we had indicated in opposition we would do.

We have been meeting with our stakeholders since early 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995 until the present time, so there certainly has been ample time for consultation. In fact, the Premier felt it was so important he designated Mr Jackson with responsibility for WCB reform, and Mr Jackson spent a whole year travelling this province and meeting with stakeholders.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Hamilton Centre, just before your supplementary, we refer to the ministers by title. It's the minister without portfolio responsible for seniors.

**Mr Christopherson:** You mean when I said "junior minister Jackson," that's what I should have said?

**The Speaker:** Yes. It's minister without portfolio.

**Mr Christopherson:** I will follow that direction in the future, Speaker.

The fact is that we had overflow crowds here on the first day of hearings into Bill 99. You have not been meeting with injured workers and their representatives. They have specifically asked you for one large meeting, which has been done in the past, so that they can all, together, with the support they receive from one another, give you the stories you need to hear if you were truly listening.

We listened to the Premier earlier today talk about wanting public input. Here's your opportunity to prove it. Prove that you and the Premier and your government care about what the public have to say. Prove that we're wrong when we say your rule changes will stifle people's opportunity to have input. Prove me wrong when I say you're afraid to meet with injured workers. Prove me wrong by standing up now and saying you'll extend those public hearings and allow all those injured workers who want and deserve an opportunity to bloody well be heard.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As you well know, every MPP in this House, from the time they're elected, meets with injured workers. We have all been meeting with injured workers. We continue to hear the stories, and obviously the stories impact us. I would indicate to you that during my term as Minister of Labour I have continued to extend an invitation to the injured workers to meet with me. As recently as January 29, 1997, I wrote a letter to them extending an invitation, and I have never yet received a response to the letter I sent to the Toronto Injured Workers' Advocacy Group. I will simply indicate we are more than willing to meet with injured workers at any time.

## YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** My question is for the Solicitor General. According to press reports yesterday, Ross Hastings, the chairman of the National Crime Prevention Council, stated his opposition to the establishment of the strict discipline facility for young offenders, which is commonly referred to as a boot camp.

According to the report, "The kids who go to boot camps, whether they go for three months, six months, nine months, don't come back better kids — they may be fitter, they can run away faster, they can get into more trouble, but they're not better citizens," Hastings said."

Minister, would you please indicate to the members of the House the goals you are striving to attain in the establishment of the strict discipline program and what research your ministry has completed which makes you believe the goals are realistic.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I read those comments as well and I'm not sure how Mr Hastings reaches those conclusions, since this is a pilot program and a made-in-Ontario program based on the best of a variety of programs we've studied throughout North America. I would urge him to hold off on reaching conclusions until we've fulfilled the pilot tenure, which is three years.

I think the comments were essentially reflective of the views of the government that appointed Mr Hastings. We've had resistance from the federal government with respect to new initiatives and this is a new initiative we feel is clearly justified by the fact that about 80% of the individuals who are residing in provincial jails are folks who have had experience in the youth justice system. Almost 65% of the individuals in the youth justice system are repeat offenders, so clearly we have to look at new initiatives, new alternatives, new directions, and that's what we're doing.

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**Mr Wettlaufer:** Mr Hastings has also suggested that the educational and rehabilitative aspects of the strict discipline program we are introducing in the province will merely result in graduating a better class of young criminal.

I know that my constituents in my riding of Kitchener, and many other people throughout the province, have great concerns about the apparent increase in youth crime. Minister, will the strict discipline program include educational and rehabilitative components? If so, what are your expectations as to the effect of these programs on young offenders continuing to break the law when they are released from the program?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Yes, Project Turnaround will have specialized educational opportunities, programs such as substance abuse, anger management and a variety of courses which will be available to repeat young offenders who will be housed in Project Turnaround. We have had the program based on the outline that was made public some time ago, endorsed by the London Family Court Clinic, the Clarke Institute, a number of very well respected organizations and institutions.

I think the comments of the federal appointee are reflective of the federal government's view towards



young offenders. They have ignored the frustrations of the public with respect to the Young Offenders Act, the fact that it simply is not doing the job. They've ignored recommendations from this government with respect to very meaningful changes that should occur with the act. They are cutting back on our funding. In fact, they're suggesting that they're going to reduce our funding by \$3 million in the upcoming fiscal year, the only province in Canada to suffer a reduction. The federal government is not in a position to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Solicitor General. New question, third party.

### AIR QUALITY

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** My question is for the minister against the environment. Minister, for nearly two years —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** No, do you know what? You've said it now, we have to do it properly, and I ask the member for Riverdale to withdraw that comment and refer to the minister by the proper title.

**Ms Churley:** I will withdraw it. My question is for the Minister of the Environment. For nearly two years I have been demanding action from you and from your predecessor, Brenda Elliott, on the auto emissions that create dangerous air pollution in our province. I have the Hansards here of the weasel words this government has been using to avoid taking a position on this, like, "We're exploring our options," like "We want to see how well it works on a public basis." The minister acknowledges that almost 2,000 people a year are killed in Ontario through this. Will you bring in a mandatory auto emissions program?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I, of course, have said that air quality is of great concern to me and to this government. Smog is caused by a number of factors, including the emissions from automobiles and cars and trucks and everything else in terms of the transportation area.

We are looking very seriously at a mandatory vehicle emissions testing program. We are, however, cautious about how we're doing this, because in the 32 states in the United States, and in British Columbia, the first program each of those jurisdictions introduced failed and they had to go to a second, and in some cases a third program. So we are looking very carefully at the options before we go ahead so that we can ensure, number one, that we get the emissions reductions we are aiming for and, number two, that the public will buy into this particular program.

**Ms Churley:** Minister, why don't you look at the many programs that are working, like BC's, for instance? You keep talking about the ones that have failed. The previous minister, in one of her responses, let her mask slip a bit. She said, "The Conservative Party believes people want government out of their face." This is an approach that puts free market ideology over the health of our people. Remember, and let me remind you again, as you yourself said, nearly 2,000 people a year die in

Ontario because of smog. Part of that is contributed, as you know, by the automobile. There are many safe and workable programs in existence already. I ask you again. There is no reason to stall any more. Our government started with an experimental, voluntary one. It worked. It is time to get on with it.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I appreciate the concern of the member and her knowledge with regard to this matter. However, it is true that the programs in the United States have met with varying degrees of success in terms of what they have achieved. It is our hope that we will be able to bring forward in this province a program which will meet our needs.

The kinds of reductions that are aimed for in other jurisdictions do not necessarily match the same kind of reductions we are looking for here. In the end, we will have a program. We will have a program that affects the areas that need this kind of protection, we will have a program that will be accepted by the public and we will have a program that is fair to all the citizens of Ontario.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. One of the big priorities in my constituency in the last provincial election campaign was welfare reform. The people in my constituency said the welfare system was broken and they wanted major change.

Home ownership is one of the important goals for many hard-working families in my riding. While many struggle to save a down payment, they watch others on social assistance enjoy tens of thousands of dollars of equity in their own homes and sometimes own their own homes outright. Can the minister inform the House if this is fair for the working poor of Ontario and how she would propose to change this in the Ontario Works legislation?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** In the reforms we did on welfare legislation we set out some very clear objectives that we wanted to achieve with the reforms. The first one is to ensure that the program is a transitional program of last resort to help people get back into the work force, that the program must be fair to those who are in low-income working positions, and third, that people should be better off working than they are on social assistance. So one of the policies that we have put forward in our legislation is that we would, in certain circumstances, place a lien on a house, not forcing people to sell but it does give the taxpayers the opportunity to recoup the investment they have made in this person's future.

### PETITIONS

#### COURT DECISION

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of the lawful right to go topless in public; and



"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the legislative authority to restrict going topless in public places; and

"Whereas sections 173 and 174 of the Criminal Code relating to public nudity be clarified to provide better protection of community standards;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to clarify legislation on going topless in public places."

I submit this petition by signing it.

1450

#### RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** It seems I can't go into a restaurant or a store in my riding without receiving a petition on health care. I received these last night from ladies who run Hewitt's Dairy Bar near Hagersville. There are well over 400 signatures from Tillsonburg, Simcoe, Delhi, Townsend and Port Dover, as well as many points beyond my riding.

"Whereas there is urgent concern about the future of community hospitals located in Dunnville, Hagersville, Simcoe and Tillsonburg; and

"Whereas distance, weather and doctor shortages are serious barriers to people in rural areas accessing emergency services and health care; and

"Whereas local communities have worked for years to establish, maintain, improve and modernize hospital, physician and other health services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt a rural health policy to deal with these problems and to protect the health care rights of rural communities; and that hospital boards, district health councils, the Health Services Restructuring Commission and the government of Ontario adhere to this rural policy."

I affix my signature to this.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature and it reads:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules for the Ontario Legislature which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I have attached my name to that petition as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We'll just go to the NDP, then come back to the Liberals. There was a mistake made at the beginning. So to be fair with everyone, I would now recognize the member for Hamilton Centre and after that the member for Port Arthur.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. It's your time. I'll explain again: There was a mistake made at the beginning. There was a member from the government who was recognized, and a second one was recognized. In order to correct the mistake, I will now recognize the member of the NDP, a Liberal, and then start the rotation again to be fair with everyone. Good. The member for Hamilton Centre.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Thank you, Speaker. I'm sure all members would want to give proper respect to a petition from Ontarians regarding WCB and workers' health.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Order. The member for Hamilton Centre.

**Mr Christopherson:** Mr Speaker, like injured workers, I'm just going to keep trying and trying and trying.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government's contribution to prevention services made through the WCB has been reduced from \$62 million to \$47 million, with no explanation as to where this money has gone; and

"Whereas the prevention services that the Ministry of Labour once provided are being offloaded to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and other safety associations, thereby increasing the demand for the prevention services provided by the centre; and

"Whereas the government has gutted the certification training standards for health and safety committee members and is replacing them with minimalist performance standards which, in combination with funding cuts, have resulted in a 40% reduction in the staff of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre is facing further cuts of \$2.3 million to finance the establishment of several new employer safety associations, thereby duplicating administrative costs and services;



"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the gutting of the funding of prevention services provided by the Workers' Health and Safety Centre.

Further we, the undersigned, demand that the moneys taken from the health and safety prevention services of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the other safety associations be returned to them."

I proudly add my name to theirs.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** This is a petition to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature.

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of the people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and retain rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I read this on behalf of the backbenchers of the government party as well.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions from members of the Service Employees International Union, Local 268, in Thunder Bay. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Labour has begun a process to fundamentally alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations with the release of the discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and

"Whereas these changes threaten to deregulate the health and safety protection for workers and reduce or eliminate the rights of workers and joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the ministry intentionally organized meetings in a manner which allowed only marginal opportunity for workers to discuss with the ministry the issues raised in the discussion paper; and

"Whereas workers deserve a full opportunity to be heard regarding the proposals that threaten the legislated provisions that provide them with protection from workplace injury, illness and death;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose the deregulation of workplace health and safety and any erosion of the protection provided workers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Further we, the undersigned, demand that province-wide public hearings be held once any amendments to the act are introduced," and certainly a lot more than the measly few days WCB is getting.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** I have a petition signed by 700 people in my riding. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, support our OPP, especially Sergeant Deane, in their testimony and actions taken at Ipperwash park; and

"We believe all of the OPP acted properly in their line of duty."

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#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** The people of Ontario are incensed about the Mike Harris plan to kill debate in the Legislature. The petitions are rolling in with signatures from all across the province. This petition reads:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead



concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to abandon these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I'm very pleased to sign my name on behalf of many other constituents as well.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union, OPEIU, Local 343. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre has provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre has made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre."

On behalf of the NDP caucus, I add my name to theirs.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by 49 tenants from 2500 Bathurst Street in my riding.

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the protections of the Rent Control Act; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to raise the limit of how high rents can increase for all tenants; and

"Whereas the government is proposing to make it easier to demolish or convert existing affordable rental housing; and

"Whereas the government is proposing to take away the rent freeze which has been successful in forcing some landlords to repair their buildings;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing rent laws which provide true protection for tenants in place."

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I have yet another petition to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature.

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to abandon these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I concur and will affix my signature.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I request leave to present the 39th report of the standing committee on government agencies.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Do you wish to make a statement?

**Mr Laughren:** No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr51, An Act respecting the City of Hamilton

Bill Pr81, An Act respecting the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto Foundation

Bill Pr82, An Act respecting the Ontario Association of Not-For-Profit Credit Counselling Services



Bill Pr83, An Act respecting the Municipal Law Enforcement Officers' Association (Ontario) Inc.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

#### ADOPTION DU BUDGET DES DÉPENSES

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to call orders 44 to 52 inclusively so that they can be moved and debated concurrently.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Do we have unanimous consent?

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On the understanding that this is for purposes of debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Yes, that's what it is. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I move concurrence in supply for the following ministries and offices:

Ministry of Education and Training

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism

Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Ministry of Transportation

Ministry of Northern Development and Mines

Ministry of Natural Resources

Office of Francophone Affairs.

I really don't have any particular comments to make other than that this is an important debate and I know that all parties will participate. It's a debate that involves the estimates of the province of Ontario, so essentially it allows the members an opportunity to speak about the spending in any of the ministries I've listed, Education and Training and Health being two big ministries, but all of the other ministries which are important to the people of Ontario.

I might say what's behind this, although it's maybe not too visible, is a great deal of effort by each individual ministry to bring forward its plans and its expenditures for the fiscal year. There's a great deal of thought and effort that goes into it. There's a great deal of thought and effort that goes into it from my particular ministry as well, Management Board, in terms of analysing the estimates, in terms of ensuring that taxpayers get value for the dollars they spend. We know that taxpayers pay a great deal towards the running of the province. The expenditures are about \$50 billion a year in total for Ontario.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** And billions more in interest charges.

**Hon David Johnson:** As my colleague across the way is saying, interest charges unfortunately make up a very high proportion of the total expenditures, and this is something that has been carried over for a number of years. The reason those interest charges are there is that

the debt of the province of Ontario has gone up, particularly between 1990 and 1995, that debt being over \$100 billion at the present time.

1510

The good news, though, in that regard is that the annual deficits which register the shortfall between expenditures and revenue — unfortunately, we spend more than the money that's coming in — are going down. This year the deficit will be about \$7.5 billion, which is still much too high but at least it's on a downward track. By the end of this term that deficit will be eliminated.

The other piece of good news is that actually the revenues are coming up. Not only are expenditures for the province going down, which is primarily what we'll be talking about today — the government has cut its cloth to suit its means and has reined in expenditures across all ministries, has reduced expenditures at the same time as developing efficient programs to serve the people of Ontario. To tackle that deficit, not only have the expenditures come down but the revenues are very buoyant. That is partially a result of the fact that more people are working in Ontario.

In the last three months, according to the statistics — I guess it's Stats Canada which keeps these statistics — some 100,000 more people are working in Ontario, which is good news. It's good news for those people who are working, certainly, but it's good news for governments too, because of course if 100,000 more people are working, then they're paying taxes. Many of them are coming off welfare, for example, many of them want to get off welfare and get working, and they are getting that opportunity. By getting that opportunity and working, they are earning money, are paying taxes and we have more taxpayers now in the province. With more taxpayers, more money comes in and helps to reduce that deficit.

It also helps with the excellent programs we have in Ontario. I know that many of my colleagues in the House on all sides will be talking about those programs — education programs, health programs — that we are proud of that we are delivering to the people of Ontario, not to say there can't be improvements in those programs, but I think we recognize in the province of Ontario that in many regards we're fortunate to have excellent health care, good education programs, good justice programs, and we need to work on them and make them even better.

There is reason to continue to work hard on the financial picture, the expenditures of the province of Ontario, but there's every reason to say that at least we see the light at the end of the tunnel. We see that the expenditures are coming under control from the various ministries. We see that expenditures are coming more in line with the revenues we have. We see that expenditures now are sustainable into the future years and that those very programs we enjoy and have enjoyed will be sustainable in the future years for the younger people, for our children and our grandchildren. That I believe is important to us.

We see that revenues are coming up, we see that more people are being employed, we see that we're heading on



the right track, but the job is not finished. The job is never finished. We need to continue to work to improve those programs and to ensure that the expenditures in each ministry are focused on delivering the best service to the people of Ontario, giving the best value to the people of Ontario that we can possibly achieve.

With those few comments I will sit down and allow the debate to carry on with the other members.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on supply and on the government's financial plans.

I think the people of Ontario, as they watch the Legislature, periodically are somewhat perplexed about the place because the opposition has one view and the government another and they may wonder where are the facts of the matter.

I would say to the people of Ontario that we've had in the last week, I guess the last 10 days, three very professional organizations whose job it is to look at the fiscal plans of governments, companies and organizations and to assess those plans and to rate their creditworthiness — these are organizations which get paid by organizations that are going to loan money to governments or to companies. Obviously, how much interest you pay depends on how creditworthy you are.

The organizations that have issued their reports on Ontario in the last few days are Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Dominion Bond Rating Service, all three of them highly reputable international companies whose judgement is respected in the financial community.

They looked at the government's finances and all three of them reached the same conclusion, that the government is putting the fiscal health of the province at risk with its tax cut. So for the people at home who are watching, as to the 30% tax cut, without question, the government's numbers show that people who are making more than a quarter of a million dollars — \$250,000 — a year are going to get a \$500 million tax break.

What Moody's, Standard and Poor's and the Dominion Bond Rating Service all say is that is a risky proposition. It puts at risk the fiscal health of the province of Ontario. Moody's the other day said that in their opinion we are at the midpoint of the economic cycle, that we should expect, as normal, a downturn, perhaps in two years, and that at that point in time the government is going to have to cut deeper than they had planned to keep the fiscal house in order.

While Mike Harris is very proud of his plan for the 30% tax cut, the independent agencies that look at the fiscal health of the province have raised real concerns. Interestingly enough, I remember Mike Harris was absolutely apoplectic at Bob Rae. Mike sat right there somewhere and Bob Rae sat over there. Mike Harris used to rail at him about the credit rating of Ontario because it used to be AAA and it was downgraded to AA+, AA, AA-, and Mike Harris essentially said that is unacceptable.

What do we find? All three that have looked at the financial plans of the province of Ontario have given Mike Harris exactly the same credit rating they gave Bob Rae. This is looking at the budget and looking at the future.

You are putting the fiscal health of the province at risk and many of the programs that the people of Ontario have come to regard as fundamental to a quality of life — our programs for our seniors, our health care programs. Incidentally, as the doctors' agreement said, we are going to see the population grow by about a million and a half people over the next 10 years, with the people over the age of 65 increasing dramatically, but we've decided that the province can afford a 30% tax cut that benefits the best-off in this province, and Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Dominion Bond Rating Service have all said to us that is high risk.

What else are we doing to put at risk the future financial health and our programs? One way the government has decided to get its spending down, to cut spending so that it can do the tax cut — what have they done? — is they've loaded expense on to property tax. I keep saying this to the Legislature because in less than a year now the people of Ontario are going to get a huge shock when they get their property tax bill. One of the reasons they're going to get a huge shock is the province of Ontario decided to dump, to download, to add on to property tax, about \$660 million of new cost. They've taken costs that used to be the provincial costs and they've pushed them on to the municipalities. That alone takes property tax up by about 5%, just that one item.

1520

By the way, I will add, particularly to the seniors in this province, all of the social housing now is on property tax. It used to be handled by the province out of broadly based taxes. It's all going now on to property taxes. When we recognize, as we in the Liberal caucus do, that a majority of social housing is for seniors, as it should be — I think the measure of a society is how it deals with its young people and how it deals with its seniors. But the government has decided to dump all of the social housing on to property tax, 100% of social housing. I absolutely guarantee you that, as our seniors realize that in difficult times they're going to have to go to city hall when property taxpayers are hard-pressed and they're going to have to be begging for the local property tax to continue to ensure they have quality accommodation, we're simply asking for problems.

I would add further that the dumping went on to dumping on to rural municipalities the cost of a program for our farm community. It used to be that there was something called the farm tax rebate, paid for by the province, and with good reason; supported by all parties, I might add. But the province says, "No, we want to cut \$170 million out of our support for our farm community, so we're going to discontinue that program but we're going to insist that the municipalities pick up the cost of it."

When we were dealing with the property tax bill, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario said: "You can't do this. You are dumping \$170 million of new cost on to rural municipalities." Certainly our farm community deserves it, but the rural municipalities can't afford it out of property taxes. But somebody has got to pay for the tax cut. That's how the province has decided to fund it.

They've added about \$180 million of policing on to property taxes. I have a saying about Mike Harris: He's



all badge and no money. He loves the photo opportunities with our policing community, loves to drive around in the OPP cruisers with the nice hat on, but they've cut \$180 million out of police financing for our municipalities.

The reason I raise all of this is because the government has to find the money for the tax cut. Now people are beginning to realize and ask, "How am I paying for it?" They're paying for it by user fees on policing and fire services. Now our seniors' housing is 100% on the property tax, and I repeat that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario begged our committee — Mr Pouliot and myself were on it — "Don't go ahead with the dumping of these costs on to our rural communities." But no, the government had to push forward with that.

Another way the government has decided to manage to cut its expenditures is that now, for the first time ever, the province is going to set the property tax mill rate for education on businesses and on residences. That used to be something that was handled by the local municipality. A local school board would set the local rate. Now, for the first time ever, the province is going to be setting the educational mill rate.

My friends in the business community thought education was coming off property tax. I said, "No, none of it, zero is coming off." The only issue, and there's a group going around the province now, is whether some businesses are going to pay more and some less. But the province is determined to raise the same amount of money, and similarly with the residential.

I remember very well early in January something called mega-week, when Mike Harris said: "It's unfair to have residences paying education property tax. We're going to take it off completely." Of course, they hadn't done the numbers. They made the announcement before they did the numbers. When the numbers finally came out, they had to begin to wipe some egg off their face and backpedal on it. Those people who heard the chamber of commerce speech by Mike Harris, that they're going to remove education from residential property tax, have had quite a little surprise, because Mike Harris found out he couldn't do it. Now, of course, it's heavily back on to property tax.

Also going 100% on to property tax are some of the health areas. Any debate we've had on health here in Ontario for the last 15 years probably has been about the need to have a totally integrated health system, to find ways, to use the jargon, to make it seamless. Yet, surprise, surprise, the province has actually decided to fragment health care. Now, surprisingly, public health and ambulances are 100% on property tax. Rather than this well-integrated health system, we're finding that the way the government is getting its spending down is by dumping a substantial amount of cost on to municipalities.

I would just say to the municipal politicians who are, hopefully, watching at some stage, I really think you do the property taxpayers a disservice by not raising the fact that they are picking up a substantial amount of the cost of the Mike Harris income tax cut, because, as we all know, when property taxes go up, people get very, very angry. There's no doubt in my mind that a year from now, when those property taxes come out, they're going to be extremely angry.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wondered if you would ascertain whether or not there is a quorum here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would you please verify if we have a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

**Mr Phillips:** The thing that often surprises people who watch proceedings here but aren't intimately involved with them, and that's understandable — I say to them, "You realize that the province isn't going to balance its budget until March 31, 2001." That's what the government says: March 31, 2001. As a matter of fact, that's a year after the latest possible day of the next election. I say to them, "You realize that Mike Harris has decided to" — and this was in the budget; you just get yourself on page 32 and you look at the cumulative deficits, how much they are adding to the debt of the province from the time he became Premier. You can see it's \$30 billion. Well, \$30 billion is a lot of money. It's equivalent to the debt that was accumulated over the first 120 years of the province. Mike Harris is adding \$30 billion to the debt of the province.

We all understand the need to tackle the deficit, and that's why children on social assistance have had to take a 20% reduction in the level of support for them. I think there are half a million children on social assistance. They're getting by right now with 20% less than they did before, because we have this terrific deficit problem. That's why seniors have had to pay a user fee, even though Mike Harris guaranteed there would be no user fees on drugs. But the seniors have had to pay a user fee because we have this deficit we have to tackle. Actually, the people of Ontario are quite understanding of that. They know they have to get our fiscal house in order.

Then I say to them, or they often say this to me — "If we have such a huge problem with the deficit" — people on social assistance, seniors, our educational community; we've got to close a third of the hospitals in this province, all to get at that deficit — "tell me again how we can afford a tax cut that will give people making more than a quarter of a million dollars a year, \$250,000 a year, a \$500-million tax break?"

1530

There is where people question the priorities of Mike Harris. If we have to do all of these very tough things — and I might add, there are more tough things coming — to get our deficit and our debt under control, tell me again how we can afford that sort of tax cut and one that, without question, the more you make, the bigger the benefit.

The government itself says, "What is the impact on revenue losses as a result of the tax cut?" Here it is. The revenue changes, the tax cut, cost \$4.815 billion a year, and that's in 1996-97 numbers, and it goes up to about \$5.5 billion. You can see it actually in the government's own revenue estimates. You can see they've said that personal income tax revenue in 1995-96 was \$16.3



billion, then it goes to \$15.6 billion, and this year, 1997-98, they're predicting \$14.5 billion.

The reason I raise all of this is that without any question of a doubt, the income tax cut represents a substantial loss of revenue. The government's own numbers show that. Every single penny of that we have to go out and borrow. We are going out to borrow the money to fund the tax cut. I say to my business friends, if you are running this like a business, and that certainly is not the way it's being done, would you declare that kind of dividend when you're still running those huge deficits? The answer, of course, is no.

So why is the tax cut being done? The first and foremost reason is because the Reform Party was going to enter provincial politics in 1994 and the only way you could keep them out, the only way Preston Manning would not run candidates here, was for Mike Harris to put together a Reform agenda — and it worked. The unfortunate deal was that Mike Harris had to promise he wouldn't support Jean Charest in the next federal election, and we saw what happened there. Jean was left hanging out to dry as Mike sat on his hands, and the Reform Party said some things that I don't think were in the best interests of the Progressive Conservative federal party or of Canada. Anyway, that's the price that Mike was prepared to pay: "Reform, don't come into Ontario. We'll give you a Reform agenda anyway."

As a matter of fact, many of the members are supporters of the federal Reform. They make no bones about it. During the campaign I saw several of the provincial Conservative caucus on television at Reform meetings and making no bones about it. Many of the members have been active in the federal Reform Party. I know that. I understand all of that. I'm just saying, if the deficit is such a huge problem, how can we afford a 30% cut in personal income tax? You can say, "Well, it will stimulate the economy." If you want to borrow that kind of money to stimulate the economy, perhaps.

On the job front, here in the Legislature we do get into an argument around numbers: "A thousand jobs a day created." "No, no, it's something different." Just in very simple terms, there are more people out of work today in Ontario than the day Mike Harris became Premier. That is fact. That is absolute fact.

Many people on social assistance actually voted for Mike Harris because he said, "I am going to make sure you get a job." In fact, here's the language that Mike used: "There are more than half a million people unemployed in this province." He railed against that in the Common Sense Revolution. Guess what? Today there are 505,000 people out of work in Ontario, as of May 1997.

Perhaps the biggest tragedy is youth unemployment. As long as there's no recognition by the government that it's a problem, it will never be solved. If Mike Harris simply wants to say, "The revolution's working; don't worry, youth unemployment is not a problem," we will never solve this. If you look at the numbers that are happening right now, in 1997, the unemployment rate for the first five months in 1997 among young people was 18.5%. Last year at the same time it was 16.3%. It is a problem. Believe me, it's a problem.

I take my hat off to some of the private sector people. I repeat this. There's an organization, Careers First, that

is working hard at trying to help young people in the workforce. I attended a session a couple of weeks ago sponsored by one of the major banks, the CIBC; a very fine job by them looking at the issue of youth unemployment and putting together a group of corporations that would help to begin to deal with it. But as long as Mike Harris says, "This is not a problem," we'll never tackle this.

I say again, there are more people out of work in Ontario today than when Mike Harris became Premier. The reason I say that is that people on social assistance, for whatever reason, I'm afraid are an easy target for a society that can be angry about things. It's perhaps understandable, but if you're on social assistance and you are looking for work — all of us in our constituencies deal with people on social assistance. We know that the overwhelming majority of them would like nothing better than to have a decent job, but when we have more people out of work today than when Mike Harris became Premier, clearly it is a challenge for people on social assistance, or any people, to get a job. And we all know many, many young people who are desperate to find work. I say, as part of the government's approach, there is a terrific danger that we are dividing this province along the lines of those who have and those who don't have.

I mentioned earlier about how the government is dealing with cutting its costs. Clearly one way they're doing it is loading them on to the property tax. I would just say that we had been promised a bill by the Minister of Finance. He said he would have it in the spring. Well, spring is here, spring is almost gone, and the bill isn't here. What was that bill supposed to do? It was supposed to help small business property taxes. I can guarantee you this: The bill that the Legislature currently has passed, over our objections, over the NDP's objections, because we saw that it was going to hurt small business, does not allow municipalities to in any way assist small business.

By the way, the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, raised this issue with us and with the government. They said, "We've been calling for property tax reform; ironically, this is going to hurt us." What's going to happen there, in a rather technical way, is that something called the business occupancy tax is gone. That's \$1.6 billion. It's all going to be added right back on to the realty tax and that's going to drive realty taxes up dramatically; more on small business, less on large business. So large business is going to benefit and small business is going to be dramatically hurt.

I also want to say just a word about the 407 because it will in the end prove very interesting to us. Its opening has been delayed for six months; it was supposed to open January 1. It now looks like the costs are obviously escalating, because the interest is growing on the fact that the tolls have not started up.

1540

It's positioned as, "This road's going to pay for itself." I will be very interested in seeing the reports on it. That's what it's supposed to do, but it looks to me like the cost is well over \$1 billion. The tolls are going to perhaps be \$50 million to \$60 million and the costs \$20 million. We're looking at net tolls in the \$50-million range to



carry a \$1-billion cost. It doesn't work. I gather that today they announced the expansion of it. We will be looking for the finances of that project to ensure that it isn't simply a way of the government borrowing more money off the books.

I want to close by saying how concerned we in the opposition are about the approach the government takes. I call it a bully approach. I've seen it in Ipperwash. I continue to feel very strongly that the government made the key decisions involved in handling what I call the Ipperwash affair, the Ipperwash incident, where a first nations person for the first time in over 100 years was killed in a land claim confrontation with the government of Ontario.

We have been told the government had nothing to do with it. We find minutes indicating the government made the decision to get those natives out ASAP. We know the Premier's executive assistant was at daily crisis meetings, often for three hours, instructed to go back to the Premier, to advise him on what was happening, and we're told there was never a minute or a note or a motion kept, forever, which is just unacceptable. We're told they can't have a public inquiry. We find there's precedent for holding public inquiries under similar circumstances.

That's why we're so angry about the rule changes. The day we forget we are here to represent the public — the public simply gave us the authority to come down and represent them, not to come down here and do whatever we want. Furthermore, the public has elected what's called an opposition to challenge and ask questions and examine. Nobody has the right to dictate their agenda.

There is no question that the rules that have been laid before us — I hope the public will appreciate that what Mike Harris really wants to do is have the authority to do whatever he wants, at whatever speed, with as little debate and input as possible. That is not what the public wants. The public expect an opportunity for their government to explain what they're doing, to outline what they're doing. If they are proceeding to do things that the public feel aren't appropriate, the public wants a chance for input on that before it becomes law.

If you tried these rules on a municipality, the province of Ontario would step in and say: "That municipality is a dictatorship. The public are being shut out." But we now find these rules that are attempting to gag and to stop legitimate debate by opposition. I know from experience the public watches and has difficulty in getting agitated about rules, but fundamentally, I guarantee you that if you give any government authority to do whatever they want and that power, any government becomes abusive. Every government needs to be held accountable. This government is asking for the authority to become abusive.

I'm pleased to add to the debate on our budget bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**M. Gilles Pouliot (Lac-Nipigon) :** Merci, Monsieur le Président. Vous me permettrez bien sûr de participer aux débats émanant du dernier budget provincial où plusieurs ministères ont subit, ont été assujettis à des coupures sérieuses.

The last provincial budget was a bit like Bre-X. The package looked very good; the budget book reads quite

well. But when you open and scrutinize, when you indulge in due diligence, you find out it's quite deceiving, that there is a focus on changing responsibilities, downloading on municipalities, in order to attempt to make ends meet.

The people at Standard and Poor's of New York, the people at the Dominion Bond Rating Service — I trust they are based in Toronto — and the Canadian Bond Rating Service — I know that one is based in Montreal — have been poring over Ontario's books for weeks now. They make it their business to assess the books and the performance of large borrowers. The province of Ontario continues to be a very large borrower.

The bond rating agency has issued a caution to the province. When you read between the lines, once you get past the legalese, they're asking, "Is it wise to get an extension on your credit card, or is it wiser to pay your debt?"

1550

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** You tell me.

**Mr Pouliot:** I'll tell you, and you should know. What they're saying is that you should forgo all future cuts in taxes in order to upgrade your rating. As the people opposite know, every level of rating accorded by the agencies represents 25 basis points in the interest rate, which translates into approximately \$25 million. If the province of Ontario was to achieve an AAA rating, it would need to upgrade three times, and this would result in a saving of 75 basis points, translating into \$75 million that it could hit the deficit with, maybe put a little more money into hospitals, into health, into education. It would make immense economic sense to hit the deficit as opposed to opt for a tax cut.

But life is not so simple if you're a member of the Conservative-Reform Party of Ontario. They went out soliciting big-time prior to the June 8, 1995, election. This lot would have done and did practically anything and everything to get a majority government, to form the government. Some of their promises they're coming close to keeping. Others have gone by the boards.

I read in the paper the other day someone mentioning that it was the big lie, after going through the program. I'm not the one saying this, Mr Speaker — it is not parliamentary — but this is what I read. It said the government shied away from the truth.

Recall, and I don't see it in the budget, that they said there would be no new taxes, that there would be no user fees because a tax is a tax, no matter what you call it. Yet if you're a senior, you've been punished, you've been levied for the first time. You will pay a \$100 deductible for prescribed drugs if you are not straight on the poverty line. If you are among the less fortunate, you will pay a minimum of \$2. They will show no mercy. They don't call it a user fee, but if you use prescribed drugs, you have to pay the fee. You can't get around it. You can't be hypocritical about it. A fee is a fee.

Then they had the audacity — the program started on July 15, 1996 — to state that not only were the seniors going to get hit with this new levy, but once a year the process would repeat itself. They couldn't wait. They quickly became insatiable, so they went to the seniors again in April — not in July — eight and a half months



after, and said, "Open your purse, open your pocket, because we're here to pick it."

An honourable member, when presented with this situation, would have one opportunity, one exit, and that would be to resign. I can assure you that if a similar situation had occurred when we were the government, having been fortunate to be a minister of the crown, I would have tabled my resignation. I would have had a great deal of difficulty showing up in the House. They got caught. No new fees —

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** Like the social contract.

**Mr Pouliot:** I see the Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines, who takes a great deal of pleasure in interjecting. In 30 seconds he can tell us a lot more than he knows.

I want to share with him, since he's responsible for northern development, the vehicle population statistics for northern Ontario: passenger vehicles, 354,663; motorcycles, 10,925; commercial vehicles, 178,424. In the last election there were to be no new taxes, no user fees. Guess what? The budget decrees that if you live in northern Ontario, you will pay \$37 for your licence plate. You know the geography. Winter is a long affair where we live. We measure distances on a different scale. We have no alternative mode of transportation. We pay as much as 15 cents more per litre for gasoline. So you're right, Speaker, we give at the pump.

The discrepancy was the recognition that since we pay so much at the pump, we would get a bit of a break. We had counted on the government not to increase, not to levy for licence plates, because they had said they would not, but they couldn't resist. Recall the health levy? There were going to be no new taxes. Let's listen to what the seniors have to say. There were to be no new fees on licence plates, and the list goes on. The government is playing a bit of a shell game. They lure people. It's a bit like snake oil at a cheap circus that's about to leave town, a tombola.

We're spending more money on health care? The population of Ontario has increased some 700,000 in the past five years. In 1993 health care costs per person were \$1,607, and this was during a very acute, very harsh recession; it is now \$1,563 per person. When they say they are spending more on health, it's not true; they are spending less. You can see it yourself. For every citizen in Ontario it was \$1,607; now it's \$1,563. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but certainly when you're reduced to this level in order to get your message across, when you push all the right sensitive buttons — this is the government that hit the less fortunate by 21.6%, the poor people.

Then some of the backbenchers will remind us at every opportunity about the children, that they care for my children and the children of others. Their actions betray what they say. They're talking about their children, and in many cases, their children are going to be just fine. What about the other children, who won't have the same chance? "Oh, well, if they fall upon hard times and they're on general assistance, I guess it must be their fault." That's the message. That's what this government says.

I'm happy. This is perhaps one of the last times that we will have the opportunity to debate freely in this House. I understand that the team of misery has gathered and developed a concoction with which they will change the rules. The opposition will be handcuffed. In a matter of a few days, the opposition will be straitjacketed. We will be muzzled. Democracy will suffer yet one more assault.

C'est quand on regarde chaque ligne du budget, chaque ministère, qu'on s'aperçoit que la véhémence, que l'idéologie de ces idéologues de droite, se retrouve à l'intérieur de tous les ministères. This is what the ideologues have decreed.

Education and training: The budget in 1993-94 was \$8.691 billion; this fiscal year, 1997-98, it is \$7.7 billion. So talk to me about not cutting in the classroom. They're cutting. They're going right to the heart of the program, and when you listen to the women and the men who are in the classroom, they know that there is a dark cloud on the horizon. They're about to be taken on by the government. They have been targeted. They will shoot to kill. They will withdraw their democratic right, one way or the other, to go to a legal work stoppage under a state of siege, and they will pick their pockets, because \$5.4 billion — that's a heck of a lot of money by any account — is the tax cut, and yet you've got this looming deficit, this albatross.

The choice is quite clear. But no, they're on the hook because they court people who are quite fortunate in life, people's whose pockets are full of money, coupons, debentures. The more you make, the richer you are, the more the tax cut is tailored for you. This is not a tax cut off the rack; this is tailored to help those who need it the least. Alas, you must pay; there is no free lunch. The hand that gives and the hand that takes, except that the hand that takes takes from those who are the most vulnerable, who need it the most. The hand that gives gives to those who really don't need it at all.

1600

You do a tax cut and on the one hand, you turn around and you padlock the most essential service, that of health care. Hospitals are being closed. We've heard of some incidents, most unfortunately, of people dying in the corridor, and it's well documented. We get up and we say, "Our condolences." Who's next on the list? No one means for that to happen. I don't meet anyone who wouldn't be troubled, but those things will happen, most unfortunately, most regrettably, when with the power of the pen you dedicate less money. What are the consequences? What are the ramifications? What are the results of cutting social services? You will find them.

The government has a right to scrutinize, to conduct due diligence, to make sure that the hardworking taxpayers of Ontario indeed get full value for their tax dollars. But you must take the opportunity to represent all Ontarians, not only those who can run the fastest, who can best defend themselves. This is not survival of the fittest. For some it is surviving the day, and they place a great deal of confidence in the most important tabling, that of the budget.

You've missed an opportunity. You had the chance. There is a recovery, and yet the money won't be coming



in in terms of tax receipts. What will you do when the cycle hits? What will you do? They pride themselves — the Minister of Northern Development always talks about balance and equilibrium. My God, what denominator does he use? Northern development and mines — get this, Minister — in 1993-94 \$83 million. That's for us, to get a little bit up north. It's gone down by more than half to \$41 million. When we were the government it was \$83 million, now it's \$41 million.

How many civil servants are out the door, are walking, got the ticket, got the pink slip? But I guess it has a certain forum, a certain audience. If you say, "Do you have too many, just enough, not enough civil servants?" we know what the answer is likely to be. But the sad reality is that you do things progressively. You must digest, you must assimilate the changes.

In my travels I don't hear anyone say they are opposed to changes. But what I hear a lot is that they should think things through more thoroughly, that in some cases they'll come up with 30 to 40 to 50 amendments to a bill before implementation, which means it hasn't been all that well thought out.

The Chair of Management Board, while opening the debate a few minutes ago, mentioned that they will balance the books, that they will reduce the deficit to nothing in this term, verbatim, and Hansard will attest to that. Yet the Treasurer says in the budget book that this will be done in the fiscal year 2000-01. Some of the backbenchers who will not be returning will sleep better tonight because there will not be an election before the year 2000. There can't be because I believe what the Chair of Management Board says. Not that he's going to balance the books. This is trickery, this is bad magic. You can't do it. It cannot be done. That's what the experts are saying. A simple matter of mathematics. No matter what snake oil you throw to people, no matter how many conjurers of illusion, cheap magicians, cheap tricks, this will not reconcile the books. Good fiscal management will, a program, a timetable, while caring. That's what does it.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you ascertain whether or not there is a quorum?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would you check if a quorum is present?

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** Speaker, you will allow me to personally thank the good office of the member from Beaches for reminding the government that it's their duty to have the House duly constituted, to have 20 people.

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, I think we're all aware of that, but thanks for reminding me.

**Mr Pouliot:** It's a long walk from the Toronto Club or the Boulevard Club. Just for some of the members, happy hour takes precedence over House duty.

I want to go back to — oh, this government is tough on crime. If they had their way, they would have boot

camps for members of the opposition. This is how tough they are on crime. Let me share something with you. The budget of the Solicitor General and correctional services: \$1.095 billion. It used to be \$1.168 billion four years ago. Those women and those men in blue who are protecting and serving are not getting the support. This does not lie. These are straightforward figures. The cash is there or it's not. You can't hid from reality. You can't spin your way out of the estimates, out of the book.

If you're one of the 550,000 Franco-Ontarians, they'll talk the sweet line but they don't walk the walk. Your budget has gone from \$3 million to \$2 million.

Office responsible for women's issues — get this, Speaker: \$23 million in 1993-94, down to \$20 million. But do they ever care? That's by their own admission. They're gutting ministries, they're slashing.

The Ministry of Transportation, in 1995-96 \$1.054 billion, in 1997-98 \$715 million, a 30% decrease in the Ministry of Transportation. You've heard of potholes, you've heard of flying truck wheels, of people ditching and totalling a vehicle? What do you expect? They've cut one third of the budget. Live by the sword, die by it. They do so at their own peril.

1610

We're not getting the services because you must find \$5.4 billion. You've got to pay back. It's payback time if you're rich. They supported you; they had all kinds of big billboards against our government. This government was to do better. Now they're into debt when they have an opportunity to get out of debt. They're not managers of prosperity.

The bond rating agencies are saying you shouldn't be in debt. This is the opportunity. These are good times. There's some consumer confidence. We're export-driven, we're resource-based, and the money is coming in. Well, no, it's not. There is a decrease in receipts, in revenue, because of the tax cut. Yet it doesn't go to everyone. Many people can hardly notice the difference in their paycheque.

Ordinary Ontarians, you take the pay stub and put it on your kitchen table and talk to your family. What will you do? Hopefully you'll be able to save a few dollars, because you're going to need it. You will need it. You cannot depend on the safety net from a government whose ideology resides on Bay Street, whose friends, whose golf companions, threesomes and foursomes, come with a calling card, presidents and vice-presidents of major corporations and, yes, the banks. They don't court the same circles. They go with what they refer to as the successful, those who can buy their way into every situation and those who can buy their way out of every situation.

The opposition has time and time again reminded the government of the need for balance, that you cannot run it like a shop, like a boutique, like a business. You can't do this. Miss Jones is 74 years of age, one of our citizens; she needs a helping hand, she needs care. Most unfortunately, she will never show a profit. We don't give her the back of the hand; we offer our hand.

There isn't enough of this direction in the budget, so I refer to it as a missed opportunity. You've had your chance. You could have said yes. You could have



redistributed more equally so that everyone would have had a chance to grow. But no, you have chosen to wear blinkers and to direct your efforts for those who need it the least.

Consequently, and in conclusion, health care in Ontario, unless there is a change of heart, a change of direction, will suffer; education will no longer be what it has been, houses of excellence, will for many cease to exist. You will see an increasing division, a gap between the middle class, the poor and those who can best defend themselves of unprecedented proportions. I don't wish to sound like a merchant of fear, a prince of doom — we have a lot to be thankful for and we wish to keep it that way — but this will be the consequence of ill-thought-out policies, of policies that focused, that selected a few at the expense of far too many.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** A week ago I spoke to a group of people in my riding in the city of Kitchener. It was interesting that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt said to the people who are watching, "What are the facts?" It's very interesting because I gave the people at this meeting the facts. The member for Kitchener-Wilmot was at that meeting and he will agree that I was loudly applauded for giving them the facts. Mr Speaker, I want to tell you about the facts.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** You have an ego. Let's hear it for Wayne.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Thank you, Mr Laughren. I appreciate that.

The member for Scarborough-Agincourt plays foot-loose and fancy-free with the numbers. He was talking about how the DBRS had maintained our credit rating for the province the same as it was under the NDP government. Of all people in the Liberal Party, he should know that there is a lag: It takes three to five years for a government to turn things around.

**Ms Lankin:** Then our bad credit rating was really the Liberals' fault.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I would agree with that, Ms Lankin. Your bad credit rating was really the Liberals' fault.

Actually, I would like to point out that during the best years Ontario has ever enjoyed economically, in 1988 the Dominion Bond Rating Service put Ontario's credit on a rating alert. That was when the Liberal government was in power. Why did they do that? They did it because the Liberal government was spending money, spending far too much money, much more than Ontario's economy could stand.

When we came to power in 1995 we had a \$100-billion debt; we also had an \$11.2-billion annual deficit. I think our economic policy has worked quite well. Our deficit this year will be \$6.6 billion.

When we came to power, the people elected us because we had some promises. We promised that we would create an environment in which business could provide jobs for Ontario. We didn't promise, as other governments did, to create jobs. The NDP government promised that a long time ago, and we saw what happened in their five-year administration: There was a reduction in jobs.

We hear constantly from the member for Scarborough-Agincourt that we are underperforming in terms of job

creation. Okay, let's talk about facts. Again there is that three- to five-year lag, a drag effect, as we know. We did provide an environment in which the private sector created 90,000 jobs in the first year. In addition to that, Ontario is creating 1,000 jobs a day; that's 60,000 jobs created in the months of March and April. Since February, 156,000 jobs were created in all of Canada; in Ontario alone, 101,000 jobs. We are the leader in job creation in the country. How are we doing in the job creation field? I would have to say that as government we're doing pretty doggone good.

**Mr Laughren:** Oh, you're great.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Thank you, Floyd.

**Ontario exports:** In the first quarter of this year, Ontario exports rose by 5.8% over what they were a year ago. Let's make that even more significant. Ontario's real trade balance in 1996 was \$17 billion higher than a year ago, and then in the first quarter of this year it has risen another 5.8%. How are we doing? Pretty good.

**Housing sales:** This is a bellwether in the growth of a province's or a country's economy — housing sales and auto sales. Housing sales in 1996 jumped by a rate of 20.2%. In the first four months of this year, housing starts are up 62.2% over 1996, more than twice the level in the rest of the country.

Then we have auto sales. Auto sales last year rose nearly 20% year over year. Up to the end of March of this year, we were up 25.7% in unit sales and 30.5% in dollar terms; for the first three months, up 14.4%

**1620**

I think we're doing exceedingly well as a government. We're providing jobs. We're providing a stable economy. Isn't that what the people of this province want?

The primary role of government in job creation, we know, is to provide a favourable economic climate. What can cause a problem in a favourable economic climate? High taxes definitely can do it. We're reducing the taxes. The \$100-billion debt can cause a problem. We can't rectify that problem until we have rectified the deficit, which was climbing annually. We've got that down to \$6.6 billion and we will reduce it to zero in the last year of our term. Government interference causes a problem, we know it causes a problem, and we are reducing the level of government interference.

We also know there is another big factor in economic growth in a province or in a country, and that is confidence level. All the experts tell us the measure of confidence in the province and in the country is way up. People are more confident that they're going to hold on to their jobs. People are more confident that their income is going to remain stable, and they are once again buying.

I want to talk about what Moody's said, because the member for Scarborough-Agincourt kept talking about Moody's. Moody's Investors Service on June 13, 1997, said: "The province's AA3 rating for domestic and foreign currency obligations is stable for the medium term. Among the strongest reasons for the agency's conclusion are the relatively low ratio of debt to GDP, continued fiscal discipline and a solid, diversified economy." In its report, Moody's notes that "the province is engineering a realignment of the spending base that should lead to further improvement in financial perform-



ance. For 1997 we anticipate a pick-up in the pace of economic activity, with real GDP posting in advance of 3%," about 3%. "Lower interest rates, tax cuts and some job gains will boost disposable income this year and thus provide for a rebound in household spending. From an economic perspective, a more competitive tax regime can enhance the long-term growth potential of the province."

That's what Moody's said on June 13.

Dominion Bond Rating Service on June 5, 1997, said, "The ratings reflect the province's strong commitment to achieving its deficit targets, reduction of program spending to a more sustainable level and a well-diversified economy that is beginning to grow at a stronger pace."

That speaks volumes about what we're doing. Before I came to this House, I was a businessman. Many businessmen have to borrow money from time to time, and I sure do like to know what it costs me to borrow money. What is it costing the province to borrow money? The difference between the Canada bond rate and what we are able to borrow money for in the province of Ontario is 16 basis points. That's the lowest spread in 10 years; in fact it's the lowest difference in this province's history. Let's make a comparison. In that time when the Liberals were in power, the time they like to talk about as when things were so glowing, the year the Dominion Bond Rating Service put Ontario's credit rating on a rating alert the average spread was 48 basis points — significant dollars, very significant dollars.

We know the Liberals have problems with numbers from time to time. They've been running around the province telling everyone our health care spending is down. In fact the Liberal health care critic in the estimates committee last week was having some trouble with those numbers and I brought it to his attention that he wasn't reading the numbers correctly. From the estimates, if one reads them accurately, it's pretty evident that we've increased spending on health care, on program spending alone, by \$400 million this year. Total spending on health care has actually increased by \$1 billion. What's the problem? Why can't they understand these figures?

We know the middle class has been suffering for years under the weight of increased government taxation. Douglas McCready, who is an economist at Wilfrid Laurier University, said he would argue that for the last 20 years we've been going through a change in income distribution that has damaged the middle class with government growing. He says, "I'm not so sure that is happening because the government is moving out of certain services." Well, I know it's not happening because the government is moving out of certain services. As a member of the middle class, I like to see that my taxes aren't going to continue growing for services this province can no longer afford.

It is very important that we increase the importance of education in the classroom, and that is what the Minister of Education is trying to do. It's very important that we foresee what the needs of health care are going to be for the next five, 10, 15 years. We must look down the road. We have changing needs. We've had revolutions in health care. We've had three or four revolutions in health care in the last hundred years. We're facing that again,

because older people want to recover at home. They don't want to be stuck in a hospital for a week or two weeks or three weeks; they want to be cared for at home. I had a seniors seminar this past weekend. We heard that loud and clear. The Minister without Portfolio for seniors, Mr Cam Jackson, came and spoke, and he heard that with me.

We have many concerns about the changing needs in this province, and we are addressing those changing needs. We are trying to increase the economic stability of the province, and I think we have demonstrated that we are doing so. Growth in jobs, growth in the housing sector, growth in the auto sector: The only thing that isn't growing is taxes. What a pleasant change.

1630

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I always enjoy the member from Kitchener. There's only one place that he's more interesting to see than in here, and it's on the front page of the Waterloo county press. I have to say that I don't think there's an opposition member that lacerated the government of Ontario, particularly the current Minister of Health, about hospital restructuring quite like the member who just spoke on the front page of the Kitchener Record when it came to "that hospital that kept me alive." It was a very powerful and passionate commitment that the member made and one that all reasonable people would want to associate with.

I could quote other aspects of the member's observations. It's too bad I don't have the article, but I remember being in Waterloo or Kitchener a year and a half ago, and the member who just spoke, Mr Wettlaufer, had some truly rich observations about the welfare agenda that was on the front page of a local tabloid. Since I don't have it, I can't make reference, but I'm sure I could find it with a little bit of time and encouragement.

But I do want to agree with Mr Wettlaufer in a couple of important respects. I think we all take pride in the fact that the Ontario economy is getting better; it's obviously getting better. I see in the financial press today that growth rates for the next 18 months are improved. The expectation is that the growth this year will be something in the neighbourhood of 3.5%; it's projected at 3.8% or 3.9% for next year. That's very good news. That's going to mean that government coffers are probably going to be in better shape than the budget that we're debating this afternoon projects.

It also is certainly going to, hopefully, mean that employment is going to get better. In my part of eastern Ontario, as I observed the other day, we have excellent news from the high-tech corporation that is known as Nortel. We had in Renfrew county just this week reports that one of our major employers, Haley Industries, is enjoying a very good level of economic growth and activity, and all members, government and members of the opposition alike, certainly want to celebrate that good news.

I think there isn't a minister of finance, nationally or provincially, who won't be pleased to see that inflation remains very, very low and interest rates are correspondingly low. Most of the gains, and I'm sure the member for Nickel Belt has made this observation, that finance ministers have made in terms of their improved numbers



over the last couple of years have come as a result, in the main, of substantially lower-than-expected interest rates. That's again good news, and it is expected to continue.

I want to make the point again today, however, that it is not good news everywhere. If we look at the current unemployment rates for Ontario, we see that they are coming down, generally speaking. They're down now, at last report, to 8.5%: too high, we would all agree, but coming down. But if we look more carefully at the specifics of those unemployment numbers, we see one of the true cancers of this North American economy today, and that's the cancer of youth unemployment.

I noticed in a report the other day tabled by a national foundation in Canada that the current unemployment rate for young people is 17%. We know that. But it is very interesting if we look inside that 17%. According to the report issued by the Canadian Youth Foundation just a few weeks ago, the jobless rate in this country for those people with some high school education is 23%; the jobless rate for those young Canadians with a high school diploma is 14.7%; for those with a community college diploma, it's 12.4%; and for those with a university degree, it's 9%. It couldn't be clearer that the people most at risk in this society today in terms of their employment and economic prospects, are young people, particularly young people who do not have any kind of post-secondary education.

Against that backdrop, I want to make reference to a story that appeared on the front page of today's New York Times. Let me quote from the front page of the New York Times today, June 18, 1997, an article by Peter Applebome under the title of "Rising College Costs Imperil the Nation, Blunt Report Says."

"The nation's colleges and universities need to cut costs dramatically or face a shortfall of funds that will increasingly shut out the poor from higher education and from economic opportunity as well, according to a blunt and far-ranging assessment of American higher education that was made public yesterday.

"The report, by a panel of public and private university officials and corporate executives, says that rising costs, falling public spending and a coming surge in demand are making the economics of American higher education increasingly unsupportable."

Going on to quote former governor of New Jersey and now university president of some place called Drew University, Governor Kean — he is a member of this panel, and he's quoted in the Times article today as saying: "The facts are irrefutable.... We are heading for a crisis at the very time we can least afford one."

I'm not going to read any more. I'm sorry the member for Scarborough East is not here, because this American data make it very clear about the rapidly increased cost in American universities, both public and private, in so far as student costs are concerned. If you look at the charts that are presented here, it is very evident that since the middle 1980s the actual cost of attending American private and public universities is going up very rapidly, and public support for these institutions in the United States is going down correspondingly. I haven't got the Canadian and American data. My guess is that while the lines are less severe, the trend to be very much the same.

What have we got? In a time when, as the previous member indicated, we see improved economic prospects, we've got in this country — and I will only speak for Ontario, obviously, this afternoon — a situation where unemployment rates for young people are at 17% at the very time we are saying we are not going to be supporting in a public way our public educational institutions, our colleges and our universities, as we have in the past and as is clear or should be clear we are going to need to do in the future.

When I go home to the Ottawa Valley every weekend and I talk to the middle-class parents the previous speaker talked about, the one persistent concern they've got, understandably, is the educational and employment opportunities for their kids. They're concerned about the rising costs of getting into Algonquin College or Sir Sandford Fleming College or McMaster University or Carleton University. They're keenly aware that those costs are going up and up and up at a time when public support is going the other way, not just provincially but nationally as well.

We keep hearing from not just these American blue ribbon panels, but I noticed a report the other day from the Globe and Mail of June 9, 1997, "Educated Employees Get Most Training." This is from a Statistics Canada report looking at who gets the training in our workplace today. Who gets most of it? Most of it is the already-well-employed, the already-well-educated, well-positioned individual. Those high school kids we talked about, those high school dropouts, are having the toughest time of all.

The question has to be asked, what are we doing about this cancerous problem? I don't expect a 1960s solution. I'm not here to argue that it's just about more government money, though we will have to spend more public resources in this area locally, provincially and nationally. There is no escaping that reality. Even the most hard-bitten Republican in the United States is coming to understand that.

I see in recent days one of the banks, and I think it's the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and I think the Toronto-Dominion — I shouldn't mention specific banks, but there are corporations in this province that are undertaking more of their responsibility, and that should be applauded. My question to this House and to the government is, when are we going to insist that the rest of the private sector corporate leadership take its responsibilities to our young people in this province at this time?

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There's a great debate and the centre-left has heard it for the last 10 years: "Just give us smaller government. Get out of our way. Let the private sector provide the growth and the opportunity." Well, we've got a smaller public sector, to be sure. Even the Democratic President of the American republic said a year ago, "The era of big government is over." All right. My question to this House and to this government is, what are we going to do to the business leadership, large and small, to encourage them — not just to encourage them; I hope it begins with encouragement. But to the extent they do not meet their social obligations, what are we going to do to hector them and to make them do their share of this work?



I want to say that those corporations, big and small, that have taken their responsibilities of providing more employment for young people should be congratulated. We should be holding up those people as good examples. But we need to see a hell of a lot more than we've seen to date. I was at the youth employment centre in Pembroke on Friday, and I'm telling you, there is some progress, but I hate to think of what those high school kids in places like Pembroke and Renfrew and Beachburg and Petawawa are going to face when they hit the streets in 10 days' time, because I don't think there are going to be very many jobs left.

It's quite clear that governments have cut back in terms of their summer employment from where they were five and 10 years ago. So let me say again to the private sector, where are you? Where do you think the skilled workforce is going to come from? What are you doing to ensure that the bright young 17-year-old high school student from Belleville is going to have some kind of meaningful summer job so he or she can advance not just in the workplace but in education-related endeavours?

I repeat, the recent research in this area is a very serious indictment of what's not happening. Let me just quote from an article that appeared on the business page of the Ottawa Citizen last month under the headline "One Fifth of Youth Jobs Have Vanished."

"One in five jobs held by young people before the last recession has disappeared, all of them full-time positions." Quoting Al Flood, the president and chief executive officer of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, he says, "Youth employment and underemployment are the most important social issues facing Canada today." It's hard not to agree with him. So I say to the government and to the business leadership, what are you doing about your responsibilities in this respect? There is some progress, yes; there is not enough progress.

I have to say what I said some time ago. The rhetoric I hear from some of my baby-boomer class that part of the solution surely is to raise the cost of college and university tuition I think is a positively breathtaking argument from those of us who basically got free education in the 1960s and early 1970s. I can't think of a more brazen, arrogant position for some 45-year-old university-educated person in 1997 to suggest than this, and many are doing it.

I got my college and university tuition not free but nearly free, and I got it in the 1960s and early 1970s at a time when there were three jobs waiting for every one of us who graduated. We stand up and tell our kids in 1997: "Oh, we've got a cure for you. We think what you should get is college and university tuitions that are triple, quadruple." You can't make them high enough fast enough. I just think that's an absolutely astonishing argument for the 45- and 50-year-olds to make today for their kids. We've just accepted it around here. We just accept that the 19-year-old graduate of a high school in Belleville or Pembroke or Listowel should walk into those colleges and universities and the sky's the limit in terms of tuition.

We better all think about what the implications of that are. I think people like Flood and company, who have been talking in the public domain in recent weeks about

the cancer that's out there, are giving us very telling advice. I was struck this morning when I read in the New York Times another panel saying very much the same thing. They said a lot of other interesting things that I will talk about on another day.

Yes, there is growth, yes, there is opportunity, I say to the member for Kitchener, but if you're a 19-year-old or a 23-year old in Ontario today, you are not sharing proportionately in that opportunity. We have an obligation, both as politicians and as business and labour leaders, to provide a better opportunity for those young people. If we think there's going to be social security, much less economic prosperity, with this kind of foundation, whether we're Tory, Liberal or New Democrat, we had better think again.

Let me just say that we are not, any of us, doing enough to associate ourselves with the concerns of young people, their educational future and their employment prospects. I don't make this as a partisan observation. I sit here many days and I just listen to the debate and I say to myself, "If I were the 22-year-old in the Beach or in Belleville or in Barry's Bay, how relevant would this debate be to me?" I'm afraid the answer is, "Not very."

One of the interesting things about the federal election that I think my federal colleagues understand perhaps better today than they might have a month ago is that the disadvantaged out there are not going to go quietly. The Atlantic region surprised a lot of people, not just the Liberals but the pollsters and a few others, by saying, "We do not accept the conventional wisdom that it has to be the way it is." If people in this chamber think that the disadvantaged, the underprivileged, the underemployed —

**Mr Pouliot:** The marginalized.

**Mr Conway:** — the marginalized are going to go quietly, then I think we all better stop and take stock from the perspective of our comfortable pew, of whatever.

I want to take a few moments as well this afternoon — does anybody know how much time I have? This clock makes no sense to me. Thank you.

There are today before us concurrences not just in education and training, health, natural resources, transportation —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Well, I take seriously the opportunities to come here and speak about issues. I'm glad to see my friend from Hastings. I want to give him public praise for being the only man in my time who has actually built the new bridge over the Moira River in Tweed. I can't imagine a more lasting political epitaph than, "I built the new bridge at Tweed."

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** He helps you get home.

**Mr Conway:** He gets me home in more ways than he might imagine.

If I could have Harry Danford's type running the department of health, people like myself and Runciman wouldn't be in the public press every day complaining about this wretched mess we have with kidney dialysis in eastern Ontario. I, for one, am fed up. The member from Belleville is here and I'm sure he's tired of getting the calls that he's getting. My friend from Lanark is here



looking sagely, as he always does. He's a little more careful in these matters than I am, perhaps even more careful than the member from Belleville.

The Renfrew and Belleville proposals had nothing to do with that fiasco in Ottawa that's gone to court and is going to be at court for another few months — nothing. So I have to go home every week and tell these 60- and 70-year-old people who live three hours north and west of Ottawa: "Oh, there's some court case, so just bear with us for months more to come. Just get in that car three times a week." I've got people from places like Rolphonton and Barry's Bay going to Ottawa three times a week for what is a six-hour round trip and a five-hour medical treatment that is not an easy treatment. I ask people to think about that.

I was talking to one of these constituents the other day and he was telling me that one of his assignments is a Saturday night. Can you imagine, from west Renfrew, having to make arrangements with your family or somebody to take you for an appointment in Ottawa at 6 o'clock on a Saturday night, stay for the five hours and then drive you the two and a half hours home?

**Mr Pouliot:** What do you do in February?

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**Mr Conway:** The member from Nipigon says, "What do you do in February?" These are patient people; they're not unreasonable people. But it's been 18 months since the promise was made. I repeat, Belleville and Renfrew have nothing to do with the national medical fiasco in Ottawa.

I for one am fed up taking this specious, spurious crap from lawyers at the Ministry of Health saying, "We can't do anything about anybody until the grand assize is held in Ottawa." I do not find that sufficient comfort to provide to a 70-year-old constituent of mine who is three times a week, every week for the rest of their lives, faced with that kind of transportation.

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** What did we tell them before we had it in Renfrew?

**Mr Conway:** What did we tell them before we had it in Renfrew? That we were going to work to improve those services.

**Mr Jordan:** You haven't had a darn thing about it.

**Mr Conway:** I say to my friend, we have made progress. We've even made progress at Hydro. When I think of the things I used to defend at Hydro when people like my friend from Lanark were there, drawing a handsome salary and doing, I know, all kinds of good things. Now we're told by no less a person than the member from Manotick, "Those were the bad old days."

I'm not here to say that everything Mr Jordan did at Hydro was bad or excessive or whatever. I'm sure he did lots of good things. I don't want any revisionism about what he did at Hydro or what we did. Of course we didn't get it all right; we made lots of mistakes. I'm simply saying that commitments have been made. We know what the data tell us about the rising incidence of kidney dialysis. That's why the programs have been expanded. I commend the government for the initiative, but it's becoming a very hard sell, particularly in places like Hastings and Renfrew, that you can't do anything because we have a situation that is all tied up in court.

Just a couple of other quick observations. There's been a lot of talk lately about the welfare reform. God, we spend a lot of time in here about welfare reform and welfare fraud. Let me say that if there is fraud, I want it rooted out. I would root it out in places that would probably provide the highest level of discomfiture for members of this assembly, particularly my friends in the government caucus. If they want to get into dealing with fraud, I'll take them in places where I'll prove to them that their pain tolerance is not nearly as high as they might imagine it to be.

After all, the leader of the "Let's clean up welfare" campaign is none other than the Premier of Ontario, who for 15 years billed the taxpayer for his golf membership. Think about that. I mean, it's just mind-boggling. I want the viewing audience out there to know that for 15 years, from 1981 to 1995, Mike Harris, the Taxfighter, billed you an average annual fee of about 1,000 bucks for his golf membership in Nipissing, all the while talking about, "Let's clean up welfare." That's chutzpah. It would be like me, Conway, getting up to make a speech about the importance of brevity and silence. I would expect the whole damned place to roll out the door in uncontrollable laughter. But Mike Harris, the welfare-basher, the Taxfighter, I remind you, billed the taxpayer for over 15 years for his golf membership, among many other colourful items. But that's the way it is and nobody seems to care, so why should I bother?

All of which is by way of introduction. I noticed in the *Globe and Mail* the other day a front-page story that said, "Ex-broker Charged With Fraud Over Stealing \$22 Million From His Clients." It's only a charge; he'll have his day in court. It is a wonderful article. You know, I haven't heard a word in this chamber about this kind of chicanery. We are too busy trying to find some single mother in Four Corners, Ontario, who mightn't have reported 10 cents of government income. We haven't a word to say about these birds who are ripping off millions from — in this case it was a delicious irony because one of the people he apparently hosed was a firm — he defrauded clients, including one of Canada's biggest security fraud investigators. Do I hear a word in this place about this?

Main street understands that for there to be an acceptance of change, there's got to be some fairness. If we're going to ask the retail clerk on the main street of Chatham or the farmer in Dover township or the logger in Renfrew county to make a sacrifice, they'll make it in the public interest if they think it is fair and evenhanded. But you know, there's too much of this stuff. There's altogether too much of it for people out there who get a sense that governments are much more interested these days in hammering the hell out of little people and turning a blind eye to some very big, powerful corporate interests.

I thought it was interesting here not too many months ago in the early days of the final days of the Eaton operation — wasn't that delicious? Did you see what the Eaton family was up to? All kinds of suppliers out there just being hosed, and what were the Eatons doing? As the bloody ship was going down, they were taking millions of dollars in dividends on to themselves which, to their



credit, once they were found out, they were prepared to give back. That's all we know; that's all that's been reported. Those are just two incidents I can think about and talk about over the last couple of months.

The people I represent in Renfrew county want the government to be prudent and sensible. They want a positive government. They know out in the Ottawa Valley that if they don't have a friend at court in government, they're in big trouble. The fact that Her Majesty in right of the Ontario government owns 50% of the real estate in Renfrew county also is an interesting fact.

By the way, they also notice that Her Majesty's land agent, in the person of the Minister of Natural Resources, has been very busy in the last couple of years raising crown fees in eastern Ontario, and certainly throughout our so-called Algonquin region. I'll be perfectly honest. A lot of my constituents support a number of the initiatives this government has undertaken.

**Mr Pouliot:** Members' pensions.

**Mr Conway:** If somebody wants to talk about that, let me tell you, I feel no nervousness. If this is about proving who's got a high pain tolerance, I won't start it. If anybody else wants to start it, I'll play the game, and I can assure you when it's all over I will not be the one crying. So just don't tease the bears. I don't mean this as a criticism of my friends in the new democracy, because I always said if I had a choice of negotiating for my own pay and perquisites or turning that job over to Mike Harris and Normie Sterling, there would be no doubt in my mind that giving it to Mike and Normie would be to my advantage. I'll say no more.

I make the point seriously that I don't sense today that there is among my constituents a feeling that things are very evenhanded. People who rip off \$22 million from clients in the marketplace are people, we're almost led to believe, to be honoured, revered, duplicated. Because we're too busy in government and politics today: "Hey, there's some single mother out there who didn't report \$10.12."

I repeat, if there are people who have defrauded the system, let them be brought to justice. There's much with our entitlement systems I could quarrel with. I spent five and a half years in cabinet losing some of those battles. But I repeat: I believe in a positive government. I think government has a positive role to play in the life of the citizen and of the community. I'm not one of these people who wants to engage the current debate that everywhere and at every turn you denigrate government, you denigrate the political class.

One of the most extraordinary aspects of the current Conservative Party and government in Ontario is how they've related to, for example, local politicians. I remember the era of Les Frost, John Robarts and Bill Davis, where one of the truly great strengths of Ontario Progressive Conservatism was a positive relationship with local government. They were past masters at it. If you were a county councillor in north Perth or a city councillor in Cornwall, I'm going to tell you, you had a very good, positive ongoing relationship with the Ontario Tories at Queen's Park.

1700

The Harris crowd — and I don't understand this because there are so many good people from local

government over there. I look at people like — I won't mention them but many of them are before me today. How is it that these people who come out of that world allow people like this Snobelen character to get up and say the things he said about school trustees, or some of these other characters who just trash local politicians? That is truly a revolution. If you can get away with that — I wouldn't try. I've got some good hardworking Tories in local government at my county level and I can't imagine even —

**Mr Rollins:** Your county is well looked after then.

**Mr Conway:** Well, but I'll tell you, I would not out of respect to the commitment they've made to their community say the kinds of things that Mike Harris and Snobelen, among two, routinely say about them. I think it is discourteous and I think it's quite disgusting.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I've never seen Mr Conway sit as quickly as he did. It took me a bit by surprise there.

I want to follow up on one of the comments made by the member from Renfrew and I think it's a very salient point, which is the view that we have as citizens when it comes to the degree to which people are ripping off the system. He makes the point, and I think it's a good one because we've all seen it in our constituencies, if you hear of somebody out there who might have cheated the welfare system or the WCB system, my God, everybody in town knows and everybody wants to see the person hung from the yard-arm and they want to see them drawn and quartered.

There's a real feeding frenzy on the part of the public to see the government do that, to really bring these cheats out and make sure that justice is done. But you know, there are all kinds of examples that I've seen over the past years where we see ripoffs in the billions of dollars, where it really is extolled as being a virtue of the private sector. I think of Bre-X as one of those examples.

We had in the case of Bre-X literally billions of dollars that were invested by hardworking people across Canada and the world in this particular mining venture. Most of the money that was invested in Bre-X I would say was not invested by people with lots of money at the beginning, investing billions of dollars. They were people investing their life savings. There are people in my community, in the city of Timmins, who invested \$10,000, \$15,000, \$20,000, hardworking people who tried to make a dollar on speculation on the stock market.

I watched that whole process unfold when we looked at what was happening with Bre-X and knowing something about the mining sector and knowing something about speculation in the mining sector, looked at that go on and watched with great amazement how, when we started seeing that that was really a ripoff of a magnitude this world has never seen when it comes to the ripoffs that we have seen the stock market, it was seen as something really smart and wonderful by the private sector.

In the end, who are the people who got hurt? A whole bunch of hardworking people who tried to invest \$15,000, \$20,000 to try to make some money on speculation. The way that we compare people like Mr Walsh and Mr



Felderhof, who made literally millions of dollars on the backs of working people and on the backs of investment funds and mutual investment funds, it's not seen the same way. We look at the Felderhofs of the world and we look at the Walshes of the world as being kingpins and being good business people who really know how to run a great enterprise, but the reality is, what have these people done? It is to the magnitude of nothing we've ever seen before.

In fact they should be put in jail for what they did, because in the end, they were the corporate welfare bums, as my good friend in Ottawa used to say, our former federal leader of the NDP, Mr Lewis. These are the people who stood there and sucked money out of the system and sucked money out of investors and somehow they are seen as being a positive thing in our economy.

Yet when we see the woman who has a \$10 overpayment on welfare or the gentleman who has an overpayment of \$1,000 on WCB and that is seen somehow as a fraud, we've got to spare no expense, we have to stop at no end to be able to root out the waste, as Mike Harris would say, and root the fraudulent people out of the system. I say what's good for the goose is good for the gander. I think I would have less difficulty trying to accept what this government is doing if they were to treat both classes of people in the same way.

Imagine, during the Bre-X thing, when you think of the magnitude of the amount of Ontarians who lost money in Bre-X, think of it. There are literally tens of thousands of people in the economy of Ontario who lost millions of dollars at the very least, probably in the hundreds of millions of dollars, that were invested in Bre-X. Did the government ever stand in this House or make any kind of public announcement that they were going to do something to try to get at what had happened, that they were going to look at the Toronto Stock Exchange about how they dealt with freezing the trading and how they brought it back on again and what that meant to investors and how many more people got duped by the actions of the Toronto Stock Exchange?

Mike Harris sat on his hands with the Minister of Finance, his minister of social services and the rest and did absolutely nothing because they viewed: "Oh, that's private sector stuff. So what if people got ripped off for the only \$30,000 they had? They should have known better. It was a private sector investment." Well, I say you should try to balance that off. If they're going to go after welfare fraud, something the government thinks there's a lot of, they should do the very same when it comes to the other side.

I think of some of the other examples we've seen over the past number of years when it comes to the kinds of things that we've seen in the private sector. Supposedly the private sector does everything best, the private sector is so much smarter, the private sector knows how to do absolutely everything so well that it does it without any error.

I think of things like Canary Wharf. I think of the investments on the part of the Reichmann family that lost probably in the hundreds of millions of dollars by bad decisions and bad investment and bad management. I look at what happened with Campeau with his real estate

empire, where he invested on the part of his shareholders in the hundreds of millions of dollars into the United States and into Canada. Because of the mismanagement and because of the bad decisions of these so-called moguls of the private sector, hardworking people lost their dollars.

The only point I'm trying to make here is that we judge that differently than what happens to a person when they happen to mess up when it comes an overpayment on WCB or on welfare. I say to this government, it sounds to me like there's a heck of a double standard.

To the point of concurrence in supply: The government people should know, every now and then they have to come before this Legislature, according to our rules that are being changed, which is another issue for debate, to ask for a motion to be able to get the dollars from the treasury to be able to pay the bills and to transfer the money over to the ministries.

In this particular case, we're talking concurrence in supply for everything from the Ministry of Transportation to the Office of Francophone Affairs to the Ministry of Health to various other ministries so they can carry on doing their business. It allows us as members a unique opportunity to be able to speak about almost anything that those particular ministries do.

I'm going to take that opportunity because I think it's important that we bring to the attention of this Legislature, when we get the opportunity, to the attention of the government and the members here, what some of the decisions that they're making here in Toronto mean to people back in their communities.

I want to talk about health care as just one of the issues that's being affected. I remember the last election. The Mike Harris government campaigned in the last election saying they wouldn't cut a penny out of health care, they were going to make sure that health care dollars were going to keep on flowing. In fact, they campaigned and said two very important things. One of them was that they were going to do something to reduce the waiting lists for people waiting to get into cardiac surgery, for cancer treatment, for dialysis treatment and all kinds of other treatments in the health care system. They were going to root out the waste and root out the duplication to be able to shorten waiting lists.

I want to tell you some stories about what some of the people in my constituency have had to put up with over the last two years since these actions by the Tories have started. It was always difficult to get in for bypass surgery if you weren't deemed to be critical. Let's be clear about that. If you were in a situation where you needed bypass surgery but you could wait for a bit, it always took a month and a half — a month, sometimes two months — to be able to get in to get bypass surgery at Sudbury Memorial Hospital, but eventually you got in.

If you needed to get surgery right away because it was life-threatening, they pushed you to the head of the list and you got in, but generally you had to wait for a couple of months. I know what's happening in my constituency office and I know what's happening in constituency offices across northern Ontario, offices like Tony Martin's, Len Wood's, Mr Pouliot's and others I've talked to, and I imagine Mr Brown has the same thing.



1710

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** That's right.

**Mr Bisson:** You end up with more people coming into our constituency offices today who are saying, "I have been waiting for bypass surgery at Sudbury Memorial," how long? A month? No. Two months? No. They're waiting upwards of nine to 12 months to get surgery. It's unacceptable and in many of cases, some of the people are not living the amount of time that it takes to wait to get in to get that bypass surgery. I've had a couple of constituents I know of who have died literally waiting to get in for bypass surgery at Sudbury Memorial. Is there a connection between the length of time you have to wait to get in for bypass surgery and what is happening here at Queen's Park? Most definitely.

The Ministry of Health in this government has embarked on a whole process of saying there's all kinds of duplication in our health care system. They're trying to make people believe it's an inefficient, ineffective, overregulated, overgoverned, overstaffed, over everything kind of health care system and that they've got to be able to fine-tune it to make it work better for people.

Well, I'll let people know back in Cochrane South that if you get sick and need to get in for bypass surgery you're having to wait three to four times as long to get in to get bypass. I've had two or three cases in about the last month where I've had to call, on behalf of constituents in my riding, Sudbury Memorial and work with their doctors trying to get them in for bypass surgery. I had one case that I raised in the House here two weeks ago where a gentleman from Monteith has to wait until June 1999 to get a spot at Wellesley Hospital for orthopaedic services that can't be established —

**Mr Pouliot:** You mean 1998.

**Mr Bisson:** No, 1999 — I didn't get my years mixed up; June 1999, that's over two years away — because of the cutbacks that are happening in the health care system. This government is trying to make people believe that all is well in Ontario and all is well within our health care system and there is absolutely nothing wrong. "Don't worry." Well, I'm here to say there is a problem.

What's even more frustrating is that I come into this House and I listen almost day after day to the Minister of Health stand in his place when he's asked a question and try to say: "We're not doing anything to affect the health care system. Oh no, not the Mike Harris government, not at all. It's that bad old hospital restructuring committee, it's that bad old committee that's travelling around the province and making all these decisions about which hospitals will close and which ones will remain open and which ones are going to be merged in with somebody else."

I want to remind people — and the member for Lake Nipigon is right, it's exactly the point — who's in charge of the Ministry of Health? Is it the hospital restructuring committee or is it the government of Ontario? Is it the Minister of Health, Mr Wilson, and is it the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris? I say it is the cabinet of this province and it is the minister. And they have the gall to stand in this House and say, "It's not us closing down these hospitals; it's that hospital restructuring committee."

Let's remind people how the hospital restructuring committee came to be. Why did it come to be? Because this government wanted to pass last fall, and was successful in doing so, what we called, in the words of Speaker McLean — how did he say it, the "ominous" bill? I can't remember, but it's the omnibus bill, Bill 26. Bill 26 contained a section on health that said, in short, the legislation gives authority to the Minister of Health to appoint people to a hospital restructuring committee for the explicit purpose of restructuring hospitals across Ontario.

The government says: "We did that because we didn't want to be political. We didn't want to politicize the whole process of closing down hospitals." What bunk. Come on, do you think people were born yesterday? Of course it's you guys who are doing this. You're the ones who appointed the people to the commission, you're the ones who gave them their marching orders. They're the people who are meeting with you and coming from decisions from the Ministry of Health about what's going to happen in the end.

I was a member of a government, and nobody is going to try to make me believe that the hospital restructuring committee, the very committee that was appointed by the government of Ontario, handpicked by Mike Harris and Mr Wilson, the Minister of Health, doesn't come back to the government after it finishes its work in a community like Toronto or Ottawa or Sudbury or Thunder Bay and doesn't sit down with the Minister of Health and say, "These are the recommendations that we make as the hospital restructuring committee." Nobody is going to make me believe there isn't discussion between the hospital restructuring committee and the Minister of Health and the rest of the cabinet; of course there is.

**Mr Pouliot:** And financing the right.

**Mr Bisson:** Well, we can get into that old debate about how there has been political influence at the hospital restructuring committee on the part of the Solicitor General and on the part of the Minister of Finance himself. Nobody is going to try to make us believe that.

The point I'm getting at is that it's you guys who are setting up this agenda, you're the ones who are responsible for the closure of hospitals in this province, and I get really, really insulted, along with the rest of the people in this province, when I hear you guys trying to hide behind the hospital restructuring committee. We know in the end it is you and it is the cabinet of Ontario that are responsible.

You have to bring this to the next step: What is this government really doing in health care? Why are they going around closing down all these hospitals? Why are they doing everything they're doing as far as all the changes in health care? Part of it is that there are some changes that need to happen, because health care is changing with time and how long we need to go when it comes to getting into hospitals and as far as stays are concerned is changing because technology is changing. But that would have happened under an NDP government, a Liberal government or a Tory government.

This government is doing what our friend the Minister of Education said when he was appointed to the cabinet as Minister of Education back in the summer of 1995. Madam Speaker, do you remember what he said? I



certainly do; I've got the videotape. He lined up his chief people within the Ministry of Education and said, "I will create a crisis in the Ministry of Education so that I am then able to set the stage to make the kinds of changes that I want to impose, ideological changes on the Ministry of Education." That's exactly what they're doing with health. Why? Because in the end they want to give the private sector more business opportunity in the sector of health. That is what they're up to.

If you're able to put the Ministry of Health and our health care system into a crisis and you're able to lengthen the amount of time people have to wait to get into hospitals, what will end up happening is that you will create an opportunity for the private sector to come in and say: "We have a solution. If you allow us to open up this private sector health clinic that will charge extra fees above what is normally charged by the Ministry of Health, you will not have to wait six or seven months to get whatever service done."

Once you open that door, you could have a hard time trying to close it again. Why? Because you'll be conditioning people to the idea that if you want better health care, if you want quicker health care, if you want increased health care, you're going to have to pay extra. You'll move to what we call now in this jargon a two-tiered health care system. That is exactly where this government is going with health care. We see it. Why? Because, again, in Bill 26 the government gave itself the power to be able to appoint private sector companies to deliver health care services in Ontario.

Why would they put that in the legislation if they didn't intend to introduce the private sector into our health care system? Madam Speaker, you were a minister of the crown. Would you put something in legislation unless you didn't have a reason to use it? Of course not. They try to make us believe, "Oh no, we just did that because we want to cover off all the bases." Come on, give me a break. Give your heads a shake.

The reality is that you are putting in place that kind of legislation because you cannot privatize the health care system in two years; you're smart enough to realize that. First you've got to set up the mechanisms to allow the private sector to come in, and how you do that is a change to the legislation. You've done much of it already; you've got more to do. Then you underfund our health care system, you start to put the system in crisis, so when the private sector comes in and says, "We have a solution for you," the public says: "Oh, you know, maybe that's an option. All I know, you know, is that old Harry needs to go in and get this operation. He's got some extra dollars in the bank. He worked hard all his life. He managed to put away \$100,000 or \$120,000 for his retirement, and spending \$60,000 will get him in now and maybe he'll live that much longer or maybe it'll save his life."

I know what family members will do. They'll choose to spend their life savings to make their loved ones well again or for the hope to make their loved ones well. That's what happens in the United States, and that's what this government is really all about. I say today here in the Legislature that if these people are given a second term

in government, you will not recognize the province of Ontario compared to what it was before.

**Mr Froese:** I hope not.

**Mr Bisson:** There we go. Exactly. As they heckle across the House — "I hope not," they say, and that's the point. They don't believe in a province of Ontario where citizens in this province have access to health care based on if they're sick or not sick, not based on how much money they've got at the bottom of their pocket.

**Mr Pouliot:** They will not have a second term.

**Mr Bisson:** The member for Lake Nipigon makes a point. Again, the member for Lake Nipigon is right; I hope you're right. Hopefully the people of Ontario will wake up and start to say, "Well, Jeez, if we give these people a second term in office, it's going to be a disaster."

They tried that with Brian Mulroney. Do you remember what happened with Brian Mulroney? We're now seeing the effects of Brian Mulroney down at the federal level with free trade and the rest of it. That's another speech, but we can get into all of that.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** There they go, heckling on the other side again. You always know you hit a nerve when they do that.

The part that really bothers me — never mind that it really bothers me — the part that really is a travesty about what this government is doing is that really they're very incompetent at what they are doing when it comes to managing change. They turn around and they say: "We're the Conservatives. We're the fiscal managers. We know how to manage government. Get us there, and we're going to do it for you, and we're going to do it well." But there are examples all across Ontario of how the Tories have mismanaged the change they have been trying to introduce.

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**Mr Pouliot:** Big time.

**Mr Bisson:** As the member from Nipigon says, big time. They are trying to do too much, too fast.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** I'm giving the members some extra time of debate; it's my right.

They are trying to manage too much, too fast, and they are not able to manage the change. I want to give you some examples of what happens when you try to manage change too quickly. People, in the end, get hurt, because the system breaks down. I have a couple of my riding whom I've been dealing with for some time, Richard and Theresa Madore. They have had a problem with the insurance company for some time and have been trying to get justice from the Ontario Insurance Commission. So that people know, the Ontario Insurance Commission is the appeal body that citizens have if they want to go before the commission to appeal a decision of an insurance company when it comes to the settlement of no-fault benefits.

It's a long story, but the point is that these people, in the long and the short, really got it in the ear by the insurance company. This guy, because of the way the file was handled and the way the policies were at the time, got himself into a position where he was not getting what was just his.



We worked with him to try to make an appeal and get it forward. Do you know how long it took by the time the appeal actually went to the OIC and how long it took for him to get back his decision? It took 24 months. Why? Because what's happening is that in this rush of change that the government is making, they are throwing the entire system into chaos. It's difficult for agencies and for ministries of the crown to properly administer the change as it goes on, and a whole bunch of things they normally do in the everyday course of business, as ministries and as agencies, end up not working very well.

In the case of Richard and Theresa Madore, what ended up happening is that their whole case, which should have taken, at the most, four to five months to get a decision, took 24 months.

In the end, they didn't get what they wanted before the commission, and that's a question of policy. If the injury had happened under our no-fault legislation, they would have been all right. Unfortunately, they got caught in the previous no-fault legislation that was introduced by the Peterson government.

The point I make is simply this: These people should not have had to wait 24 months to get a decision out of the OIC. These people should have been able to get a decision at a fairly expedited pace in order for them to go on with their lives so that they would know what they had to do, but for 24 months they waited, they called, they faxed. We did the same on their behalf. I don't know how many times I sent letters and faxes and made telephone calls to the Ontario Insurance Commission to get an answer, and 24 months later they finally got the opportunity to respond to their case. Those are the kinds of things that happen.

Another good example is the family support plan. In the case of the family support plan, the government of Ontario threw the system into chaos. How many of you on the other side of the House have had people come into your office to talk about the absolute mess that was created by the Attorney General when it came to the family support plan?

The FSP has always been a problem. The first problem was that we had no enforcement mechanism. In the case that delinquent fathers were not paying support for their children, there was no mechanism to get the money. The Attorney General of the day under the NDP government, Mr Howard Hampton, put in place what were called the family support plan regulations, which basically said if you didn't pay, you were going to be garnisheered at work and the money would at least end up going to the kids. That fixed about 80% or 85% of the problem, a huge step forward.

The Tory government, on getting elected, decided they were going to do something different. They closed all the regional offices, the one in Sudbury more particularly for us up in Timmins, and all the files that were at the regional office in Sudbury were just stopped at one particular date in August 1996. They were all packed into boxes, and they were left in the dark somewhere in Sudbury for a number of months.

Meanwhile, all these people had problems and changes of order and all the different things that happen. For example, if the father changes jobs, the support order has

to be changed so that the money can be deducted from the new job. There is a change in support order as far as the level and how much payment. There is a change of address of the wife or the children, or one of the kids moves away from home, whatever it might be.

All those things were falling through the cracks, and we were getting literally hundreds of people per month coming into our constituency office in Timmins, complaining about inaction on the part of the family support plan. Why? Because the Ministry of the Attorney General, in trying to privatize the services of the family support plan, which they eventually did with the Bank of Montreal, had packed it all into boxes and said: "The private sector will fix this up. Just put the files in the boxes, and it will be fine. The private sector will take care of it for us, because they're a lot smarter."

To this day, people are still not getting answers, and that is even after they have managed to transfer some of those responsibilities over to the private sector. Fortunately, it took actions on the part of Shelley Martel and Peter Kormos to go there —

**Mr Pouliot:** Bonnie and Clyde.

**Mr Bisson:** Bonnie and Clyde, as they have been called — to go into the family support offices in Sudbury to expose the truth, something we, as New Democrats, had been saying in this House for how many months?

We would come into the House, and we would say to the minister: "The system is in a shambles because of your actions. Files are sitting in boxes in Sudbury." Eventually, we had to tell them, when the files were moved, that they were sitting in Downsview. "No, no, there's nothing wrong; there's a fully staffed operational office," he would say. But it wasn't until Shelley Martel and Peter Kormos went there one morning with cameras that the truth was exposed and the minister finally, at the end of a fairly long process, had to admit that they had messed up.

In fact, the Ombudsman reported just recently the travesty and the pain and the suffering that the Ministry of Attorney General had inflicted on the people of Ontario. On the basis of what? On the basis of this government saying: "We know best how to manage the system. We know best how to do things. We're going to fix it for you. We're going to give it all to the private sector. They're going to make everything run better. We know how to manage change." Their changes wrought havoc on a lot of people.

We ask our government for one thing. We say if you're going to make change, at least manage it. At least try to make the change in such a way that when change does happen people don't fall through the cracks unnecessarily. But that's not at all what this government has done. This government has been, quite frankly, pretty inept when it comes to making change.

The other thing I want to point out is — I remember this, Madam Speaker, you were a member of this government and my friend the member from Nipigon was a member of the government as well — under the Bob Rae government, when we undertook to make some changes in how the municipal and provincial partnership operated, we started a process that was called disentanglement.



I remember when we went through that process how difficult it was to try to get municipalities and the provincial government to come to terms with who should be doing what. I remember the criticism back then, because we had made a number of changes in how you transfer dollars to the municipalities and who is responsible for what, but we were doing it fairly slowly and fairly methodically. Rather than trying to make a wholesale change where you try to change everything immediately with regard to how municipal governments and the provincial government, in partnership, deliver services such as welfare, maintenance of roads, snowplowing, homes for the aged and all that kind of stuff, we had decided you can't move that too quickly, because if you do, there are going to be problems, people will fall through the cracks, and in the end people will get hurt and you'll probably not save any money.

This government knows better. The Harris government gets elected, and they say what? They say: "Oh, no. We're going to put together this Who Does What committee and they're going to tell us how to do this in six months" — they're going to change the municipal-provincial partnership in six months, something that took over 100 years to develop in Ontario — "and we want it all done and in place for the municipal elections in 1997." The havoc they have caused within municipalities across this province has been nothing but a travesty.

I have been part of some of the discussions with councillors, mayors, reeves and aldermen across northern Ontario who have to deal with the reality of what these changes mean to municipalities. Do you know the thing that is really difficult for those people trying to manage this change? They have absolutely no idea what the government is going to do next. I don't even think the government knows what it's going to do next when it comes to municipal government.

All I do know is it's the largest download on to municipal governments that we have ever seen in the history of the province. What's really interesting about that is that in the last Common Sense Revolution — do you remember that document, Madam Speaker? I've got to show the cover. I keep a copy of it. It's quite good. It's called the Common Sense Revolution. It has a picture of Mike Harris on it and it says, "The Common Sense Revolution: Join Mike Harris — 1-800-903-MIKE."

Do you know what it says inside that when it comes to municipal disentanglement and when it comes to how government should be able to operate? I've got to read this, because I believed it then. I thought this was pretty good back then. We'll see how it plays out.

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They write in the Common Sense Revolution: "Historically, municipalities have responded to provincial funding limits by simply increasing local property taxes. There may be numerous levels of government in this province, but there is only one level of taxpayer — you. We will work closely" — I underline the word "closely" — "with municipalities to ensure that any actions we take will not result in increases to local property taxes." The two operative phrases in that promise the Mike Harris government made were: "We will work closely," and "We ain't going to raise property taxes."

How close has the Mike Harris government worked with the municipalities in Ontario? With a sledgehammer. That's how close you guys have done it.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Very close.

**Mr Bisson:** Oh, very close. I just can't get over how excited the mayor of Iroquois Falls, Ken Graham, the mayor of Matheson, the mayor of Timmins, the mayor of Kapuskasing, the mayor of Bell River, the mayor of Hearst and all those mayors are, Joe Mavrinac in Kirkland Lake included, with how closely you've worked with municipal governments.

You should be parties to the council meetings that are happening across northeastern Ontario. You should go sit at council meetings that are happening in the cities of Toronto and other cities around the city of Toronto. They're sitting there and saying: "At least if you're going to do the change, tell us what you're going to do. Work with us. Tell us how you're going to manage it."

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Member for Cochrane South, your time is up. I just thought you needed a reminder of that. Further debate?

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** I'm certainly pleased to have this opportunity to make some remarks about the 1997 budget and put on the record some of the things this government has been doing contrary to the views of the opposition parties opposite.

I'd like to start by saying that when the Ontario electorate put the Mike Harris government in power two years ago, we were given some very strict instructions about how to deal with the serious financial problems the previous two governments had left this province with. We were told to fix the problems. We were told to do something about the problem of high deficits and high taxes, but most important, we were told to create lasting jobs for Ontarians and to make Ontario more attractive for business and investment. I think we have come some distance in the last two years in starting to realize that objective.

Before we get into where we ought to be going, we need to set the tone and context of where we had come from. In that mode, I'd like to mention that we had accumulated many problems in our province over a long, long period of time. For far too long, governments at Queen's Park financed their huge and growing deficits by, voila, raising taxes rather than bringing spending under control. It was always the spending side that was ignored in the last 10 years.

I'm proud to say that the 1997 Ontario budget is proof that the tax-and-spend principle that guided the previous two governments is over once and for all. Our plan is to put money back into people's pockets, into programs that will yield high, productive jobs and boost job growth by reducing the size and cost of government, and particularly by reducing provincial income tax rates. Undoubtedly, if you look at the most objective economic identifiers, those economists who are always studying the Canadian economy, we are getting there. Our plan is working.

Here is some of the proof. We are going to implement the next two phases of the provincial income tax rate reduction down to 47% of the basic federal tax on July 1 and 45% next January, for a 22.4% reduction since 1995. That is significant because it is one of the keys to job and economic growth stimulus.



It's been mentioned by some of my other colleagues earlier today that Ontario's private sector is creating nearly 1,000 jobs a day. This shows that the rate of confidence in our economy and in our society is coming back. That's 45,600 jobs created in March alone.

Third, Ontario's economy recorded its strongest performance in the third quarter of 1996 with a 3.8% growth rate. As I mentioned earlier, consumer confidence has increased by 22.3% over last year's rate. Exports and motor vehicle sales are up significantly and Ontario leads the country in business optimism. According to the Royal Bank, the national economy will create nearly 700,000 jobs over the next two years, with Ontario leading the way in creating almost half of these projected jobs. Most gratifying for this government, 193,000 fewer people are taking social assistance today than when we took office two years ago.

I know these facts are unpleasant to the opposition parties across the way. They really hate good news, although a couple of them made efforts today to incorporate and be somewhat fair in some of their remarks about what is going on out there as economic realities. These facts I've mentioned are not propaganda, not fiction, not wishful thinking; this is the reality. These numbers aren't lying, because all you've got to do is look at StatsCan stats or at the banks or any of the other folks in the think tanks and you will see. If they were all that way, then there must be a massive conspiracy going on if it were the other way.

I want to focus for a minute on tax reduction rates and how this will stimulate our economy in Ontario.

First, this government has been the first government in 10 years and longer to leave more money in the pockets of Ontario citizens. Men and women across the province will be able to make purchases, consumer choices, as they decide. I heard earlier this year that the opposition thought this was a dreadful idea. Some of them even said: "Imagine, some of these folks may use this money to save for whatever purposes, for their children's education, by putting it into a registered education savings plan. They may decide to buy more insurance. They may even," imagine this, "decide to invest." That's the sort of decisions we need, private individual investment decisions to get this economy moving, not massive government intervention by pitching more money, \$6.4 billion of the previous federal government —

**Mr Klees:** Taxpayers' money.

**Mr Hastings:** The taxpayers' money, as my colleague from York-Mackenzie says. Leave it with those folks to make their private decisions. When they go out and save or spend at a later date or pay down their mortgages, whatever decisions they decide to make in this area, they eventually create jobs, sooner or later. Now we're starting to see that those who saved the money are putting a little more out in a careful way for decisions on things they prefer. Imagine people having the choice today to decide what they might prefer for personal pleasure: a vacation. That was mentioned, in fact, as if that were a criminal act, by the opposition across the way last winter.

Second, families who have been struggling to get by and going into debt will be able to pay off their debts sooner, as if that were somehow a criminal act as men-

tioned by previous opposition critics. What does that do? It leads to the point that these people increase their net worth, significantly or in a small way. It reduces debt. It increases their future purchasing power and increases above all the pool of savings available for new investment, again leading to job creation.

Third, lower taxes will provide more incentive for entrepreneurs to form small businesses and for existing business owners to reinvest. This too will create new jobs. One of the particularly important events and items of assistance in the 1997 budget is to help people grow their small businesses.

Fourth, people with specialized skills will have an extra incentive to choose Ontario as a place to live and work, helping to build industries that can compete worldwide, and that creates jobs.

I recently had the opportunity to visit the University of Guelph with the kindly welcome and leadership of the member for Guelph. We had the opportunity there to see what is happening in the world of biotechnology and how a lot of future jobs in biotechnology in the agricultural sector will lead to tremendous job creation in terms of new drugs.

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I'd like to make particular mention that in the March edition of *Fortune* magazine there is an article called "Gene Chip Breakthrough." This particular article focuses on the human genome project and the genetics revolution within the biotechnology revolution.

**Mr Bisson:** Baa.

**Mr Hastings:** For the folks across the way to "Baa" and dismiss this — they keep talking about, "Where are the jobs?" I've been trying to listen. When we heard the member for Renfrew North speak today so eloquently on youth employment, I was waiting: Okay, we now have the analysis. Where are the solutions? He was talking about higher tuition fees, which is a common phenomenon across North America and throughout the world. How do we deal with that problem? How do we deal with the problems of youth employment today in terms of the underemployment, in terms of the overemployment? We have to look at these new areas in which there are many promising job prospects. I will later get to the way in which some of these things can be created.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Hastings:** Madam Speaker, would it be possible for the folks just once to hear? I listened with some respect to the member from Cochrane and I did make two interventions, but we seem to have a continuing humdrum over there, which points out how disconnected from reality he is becoming, increasingly every day.

To get back to the point of the prospects for job creation within the biotechnology revolution, I simply wanted to make one quote:

"When future historians finish deflating the late 20th century, an era acutely distended by hype, they'll probably be left with just two events worth entire chapters. One was the advent of the computer chip, which let us embed our smarts in everything from bombs to greeting cards to cellular phones. The second is even more momentous: Scientists have cracked open the human genome, our ultimate life stuff."



Translating that back to what is going on at the University of Guelph as one example, the folks who are running the agricultural school at the University of Guelph see enormous potential in the transgenic chickens and supereggs, as I called them when I was there, which we will see in healthier livestock that will prevent disease prevention down the road. A lot of these are high-value research jobs, not only in the research sector, but also in terms of the support staff that will be available —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane North, come to order, please.

**Mr Hastings:** The member for Cochrane North some day may even have to go out and renew his certification in plumbing and electricity, because that's one of the areas that has to be updated since the 1964 act. We're all looking at, where are the jobs coming from? In my estimation, the overall objective of this budget is to lay the building blocks in terms of dealing with the value-added jobs that we will need in the economy.

Before we can get to that point, we have to get our taxes in a more competitive strategic advantage. I wanted to ask the question today, how do Ontario's taxes compare to our international competitors and trading partners? This is rather alarming for the folks across the way, especially the official opposition, whom I would describe as the high-taxing, high-spending party we've had for the last 15 to 20 years, particularly at the federal level.

Ontario taxes are 7% more than those of our top five trading partners between 1964 and 1994. Direct taxes on individuals increased. I know across the way they don't see this as very significant, but when you just think of the percentage, even if you tend to doubt it somewhat, direct taxes increased 2,500% on individual citizens in this province, compared to citizens living in the adjacent jurisdictions around us. Indirect taxes increased by 975% and corporate taxes by 649%.

Two thirds of those increases happened between 1985 and 1994. When we compare our personal income tax rates to residents in the US — imagine, now, anything this government quotes as an American source is immediately suspect, but across the way, whenever they want to use an American reference, it's perfectly acceptable, perfectly legitimate. I don't understand the dichotomy of that. As an aside, it seems to me when we look at our personal income tax regime to residents in the United States, Americans are paying no more than 39.6% in income tax on incomes greater than US\$250,000.

Get this: Ontario residents, by contrast, move into peak income tax rates of 53.2% on incomes greater than C\$67,895. The fact that future generations must pay more than today's newborns means that current policies cannot be sustained. This is why our government has acted swiftly to reverse the tax-and-spend policies of the previous two governments that have nearly bankrupted our province.

If higher spending were the solution to everything around here, then I don't understand why in the previous regime of the NDP there were any waiting lists for any kind of health care in cardiac surgery or hip replacement. It's only happened since we've reduced the income tax

rates? Not quite true when you look at the sharp disconnection by the member for Cochrane North in making that assertion. If higher income taxes were the solution to our problems and poverty, then we shouldn't have any poverty today. It should be completely eliminated by the tax-and-high-spend regimes we've had for the last 10 years.

When fully implemented, all taxpayers will benefit from our income tax rate reduction by 30.2%. All taxpayers with incomes under C\$60,000 will receive an income tax reduction of 30% or more. I'd like to know what is wrong with that when we're talking about simply getting Ontario back to where it was 10 years ago — nothing more; nothing less. The way they describe it over there, you'd think it was the most radical restructuring of the tax regime ever conceived. What we're doing is rebalancing the mess created by the two previous governments.

Some 64% of the benefits from this income tax, it needs to be stated again, will be concentrated on middle-income Ontario citizens earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 a year. Of course, we hear the definition every day across the way, their traditional religious mantra of the wealthy getting a tax break: \$53,254, as set by the previous Treasurer. So if you earn a penny more than that, under the previous Treasurer of the previous NDP regime, you are considered wealthy.

That means every member in this House, including the members across the way, is wealthy. I'm sure they all turned in their income tax reduction when they got it, so we could have the deficit reduced. I haven't seen too many of them doing that, when you look at the number of citizens who donated to that fund that the Treasurer set up — about \$9,000. I could safely assume that a large number of the citizens in this province kept their income tax, what they got refunded through Revenue Canada. I suspect the vast majority, probably 99.999% of the members of this House, did the same thing, despite all the posturing we've had around here for the last year on this issue.

Just as tax rate reductions create jobs, so do they create hope. The 1997 Ontario budget reduces taxes for 30,000 low-income families. I don't see anything wrong with that. I don't hear any criticism from across the way on that point. Twenty thousand families will pay no Ontario income tax. That's an achievement. All told, provincial income taxes have been eliminated for 655,000 low-income Ontario families.

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In fact, there are no fewer than 20 job-creating tax reductions in the 1997 budget. These range from more cuts to tax-killing payroll taxes to an extension to the land transfer tax rebate for first-time home buyers. I think there's a connection there, when the member for Kitchener was talking about a huge increase in the number of people who are buying their first home. Imagine the number of jobs that creates in the economy, indirect and direct, in the construction industry.

There's an extension to the retail sales tax rebate for farm building materials; a 10% tax credit for employers to create 45,000 internship spaces over the next three



years; five different measures to boost high-tech job creation in research and development; and new tax incentives to encourage loans to job-creating small businesses.

Those particular measures are essential building blocks in the 1997 budget in terms of how there is a major challenge facing this government to create new jobs for those people from the low-income and disadvantaged group in our society. For a moment I would like to address the issue of how we create the jobs in that particular area in the new economy.

**Mr Pouliot:** Slavery.

**Mr Hastings:** We hear from across the way the usual facetious remark, "Slavery," when in fact what we need is to be hearing from the members opposite how we can get more computers into every classroom when we don't have the money, how we can recycle the high technology so that those folks who are disadvantaged economically have access to technology.

There are many ways, and I'm going to have the opportunity to join a group in Boston on Friday to figure out those ways in which we can get thousands of computers that the Minister of Education and Training has targeted for this province into every school so that all our kids have a real advantage in getting some computer technology expertise, because it doesn't matter whether it's the highest-tech job or the lowest-tech job, all entry-level jobs today are computerized to a greater or lesser extent.

It seems to me this is one of the key building blocks, through research and development, through targeting of very small amounts of money in connection with the private sector and with the foundations, with which we can get this particular goal accomplished. If we do not, the Ontario and Canadian economies will be at high risk compared to what is going to be happening and is already happening in the United States of America, where the Clinton administration and Vice-President Gore have committed to making sure that every child throughout the United States has access to a computer.

When I talk about computers, we're not talking about them as the be-all and end-all. They are simply a tool, another step up to help our citizens move into the global economy. It doesn't mean you have to spend tremendous amounts of money to have the latest 586 type of computer. A 286 or 386 with the appropriate software is one of the best ways that can be done.

These are some of the measures, through the building blocks in the 1997 budget, through the biotechnology

revolution that's occurring in this province and through the community colleges, which are trying to create higher, enhanced-value jobs in the plastics industry and in many other key sectors of the economy, through which I am confident we can achieve, with the private sector, the 725,000 jobs we were talking about when the Common Sense Revolution was announced back in 1994.

I have to remind the members opposite that it is not government that creates jobs, generally speaking, except when they hire specific people for specific functions in either the provincial or federal governments or at the municipal level, for example, in roads development, as roads engineers or science specialists in gene research that we saw at the University of Guelph.

Overall, I'd say probably 95% to 97% of the 725,000 jobs that were mentioned in the CSR and have been alluded to in the last two budgets will come through the private sector. How government can help to remove a lot of the barriers that are job-killing in the present economy — and we have a lot of bills in front of us. If we could get some cooperation from the opposition, particularly on the red tape bills that the NDP has claimed need to be examined in so much detail — they are in fact hurting the Ontario economy in terms of some of those red tape barriers.

All you have to do is look through Bills 118 to 122 and you can see in the securities industry, in the racetrack industry, in the hotel industry, in the travel industry, a lot of things that can be removed — in the mortgage industry, for example, that we want to get on with. Yet the third party over there says: "No, we're not going to pass these bills as a group. Each one has to be examined in detail." Does that help to create jobs, which was the lament of the member for Cochrane North all through the winter last year? Here he has an opportunity to help us, help the Ontario citizens and help the Ontario economy. What do they do? They refuse to pass them. Incredible, but not surprising.

Let me end by saying that the 1997 budget that Finance Minister Eves has brought forward — a lot of the effort of my caucus members, in the caucus committees, in the policy advisory committees, in suggestions presented by many interested citizens have focused to renew job creation, which is the *raison d'être* for future excellence in other budgets that will come up in this government before the next election. I'll be proud to go to the people of this province with what we have in these budgets and in the future ones.

*Report continues in volume B.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
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Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kitchener	Wetlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)</b> Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)</b> Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)</b> Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)</b> Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC)</b> Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
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Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b> Speaker / Président	Oriole	Vacant
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaitre, Bernard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)		



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Komos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Vacant
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Turnbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

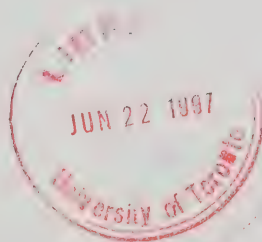
Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 18 June 1997

Mercredi 18 juin 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 18 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 18 juin 1997

*Report continued from volume A.*

1800

## CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

Continuation of debate on the motion for concurrence in supply.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak on the concurrences of a variety of ministries. The agreement has been between the parties that we'll be able to look at all the ministries at once, which I think makes sense for all the members. I'll be dealing specifically with education, health, agriculture, transportation, natural resources. Those will be the ones which I will isolate, as well as dealing with some peripheral matters related to the concurrences.

I want to say, first of all, that because of the rules we have in the Legislature at the present time, we are able to deal with concurrences for an allocation of six hours. What this allows for each of the members is an opportunity to look at each of the ministries here and raise issues that we normally cannot raise during question period, or it's more difficult to do so in statements.

My friend from St Catharines-Brock and I have been meeting with people in transportation who work in the transportation building in St Catharines, the headquarters, to discuss with them their legitimate concerns that, having made the decision to move to St Catharines or nearby to St Catharines in terms of their employment positions and having in some cases inconvenienced themselves or made decisions which have had great ramifications on their own families, they now find they are perhaps not going to be able to retain those jobs.

They are justifiably concerned that the government may be privatizing too much of the Ministry of Transportation. This isn't to say that the government cannot look at all avenues of action but they are concerned that in their particular instance, having made a commitment to move to the headquarters at St Catharines, their jobs might disappear.

There are even people who believe — I'm not so pessimistic in this regard — that building will close as far as being a transportation building is concerned some day. Indeed if we see a continued diminishing of the number of people employed by the Ministry of Transportation, that might well happen. That's why the member for St Catharines-Brock and I directed a letter to the Minister of Transportation conveying that particular view, that these people had made a considerable sacrifice, had made a major decision to move to St Catharines, and for their sake and, as important to us as a community, for the sake of our community, we hoped those jobs would be retained in St Catharines, because one of the factors in helping to

renew our downtown area in St Catharines has been the location of the Ministry of Transportation building there and the financial spinoffs that are part of it.

That's what concurrence is, what this kind of debate which is provided for, I note, in the present rules that we are governed by allows us to do. In the rule changes, that would not be the case. There would be a further restriction on the time to canvass these important issues.

Another I have is in the Ministry of Transportation, which is something that I didn't know. During the folk arts festival, I encountered an employee of the Ministry of Transportation who told me that when we're talking about all of the truck safety matters, although the police can access the information when they get licence numbers on bad truckers from the United States, although the police can access who those people are in an attempt to lay charges or to communicate with them, the Ministry of Transportation employees who are doing inspections don't have the same right. I hope that when the bill comes forward for final consideration after it's been through committee, that provision has been put in, because that would be very helpful for our people who now have to simply allow those people to get away with some of their violations once they've left the province.

Those are two matters, as I say, that we can raise in concurrences.

I want to deal as well with health, which is a very important area of interest to people in my area of the province, which is the Niagara Peninsula. They are particularly concerned with the potential closing of hospitals. I think of the Port Colborne Hospital, which people in the area are very concerned about and have come out in great numbers to express that concern. I think of West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie, I think of the Niagara-on-the-Lake hospital, I think of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby and the Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines.

The reason I mention each of those hospitals is that under a report from the local commission on restructuring of hospitals, a committee which was established by the Niagara District Health Council, each one of those has been targeted to close as an active treatment hospital.

I have heard Dr David Foot of the University of Toronto, who deals in demographics and is a statistician as well, speak at Brock University. One night, by the way, they had a sellout of business people in the community, a total sellout of the Sean O'Sullivan Theatre when he spoke. One of the items he emphasized, and he emphasizes this in his book *Boom, Bust and Echo*, is that where you have a large portion of elderly people — and we in the Niagara Peninsula have per capita the largest number of people over the age of 55 of any community that size in Canada — you should be not closing hospi-



tals. You should be very cautious about moving rapidly to close hospitals.

If I may tie into this, which I'm going to try to do throughout my address this afternoon, why the rule changes make a difference, it is because we wouldn't have the same opportunity to deal with these matters if we have less time for the government to push through its legislation.

We will all remember Bill 26. Bill 26 was that famous omnibus — some people call it ominous — massive budget bill which gave unprecedented and huge powers to unelected people who advise the government, the political advisers, to the senior civil service and to a narrow number of senior cabinet ministers at the expense of other elected members of this assembly. You will recall that that bill established the hospital restructuring commission of Ontario or, as I call it, the hospital closing commission, because that's essentially what it is doing: closing hospitals.

So each of the members here who would like to perhaps debate in the Legislature a bill to deal with the future of hospitals — we would all like to be able to debate that in the House. I would like to be able to and I'm sure my colleagues from the Niagara region would like to get up and speak about the potential closing of hospitals, that something would have to be included in a bill that would pass the Legislature. But we won't have that power because the hospital restructuring commission of Ontario will look at the local report that's produced, will produce its own report, and we could see at least five, and perhaps more, active treatment hospitals closed in the Niagara area despite the fact, in the information that I have seen, that we will need all of those hospitals and the beds included in those hospitals and the special services provided.

At Hotel Dieu in St Catharines we have the oncology unit which deals with cancer patients. We have as well the renal dialysis, kidney dialysis, unit which has far more people who would like to get into it than there's really capacity for, so at this time at least some have to go to Stoney Creek. We hope that can be rectified. It has an excellent palliative care unit. It has a unit and a program that deals with children with special needs, autistic children. It has a diabetes centre adjacent to it. So you can see that this hospital plays an important role for everybody in the Niagara region, and yet that hospital, according to the report put forward, is destined to close.

I would like to see us have rules in this House which allow us to debate these matters. When I see the government wanting to change the rules to restrict debate, I see that these kinds of moves will move through more quickly. They should at the very least have a proper debate.

I believe that none of those hospitals should close. Should there be some changes in them? Perhaps, and the local people in those hospitals might tell you what they should be. But should they be closed, should they be substantially scaled down? My answer to that is no. What is lacking now is the appropriate funding in those hospitals. Ask anybody who's been in a hospital or had a family member or friend in the hospital 10 years ago and then today, "Is the service the same?" It is not. It is far

less in the way of service, not because the people who work in the hospitals want to provide less service; there are simply fewer nurses, fewer orderlies, fewer support staff available to deal with the needs of the hospital. As a result, they tell me now if you go into the hospital, you better have a good friend or a member of the family there to stay with you to look after you because there isn't the staff available.

I happen to think there is a need, as I know my friend from Grey-Owen Sound would, for those nurses and for the other staff members. I believe the people in my part of the province are prepared to invest their tax dollars in that kind of health care, in quality health care. If you ask them, "Would you rather have the tax cut or would you rather have your hospitals appropriately funded?" they'll say, "Gee, I would like a tax cut, but if I had to make the choice, I would prefer to have good hospital care." That's what I'm getting from most people — not everyone, but most people.

I hope our government in Ontario will look carefully and assess what it is doing to hospitals in our province and that it will provide the appropriate funding for health care.

There are many health care issues. There's a mental health care issue out there which is exceedingly important. Many of the people you see wandering the streets of Toronto and other communities today are former psychiatric patients. In some cases, unfortunately, they are not being welcomed back at their homes because the people at home do not feel they can cope with their special needs. In some cases, they have absolutely nowhere to go and so they are left wandering the streets. Surely we have an obligation to these people. They have a disease. It is not as though they want to be that way. They have an affliction or a disease. I think we have to meet those needs, and I hope the Ministry of Health will do so.

I look at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs as a ministry that's under consideration today. I want to say that I think agriculture is a very important industry. The member for Huron last Thursday morning, I believe it was, brought forward a resolution in this House dealing with her concerns — very legitimate — about agriculture in this province and the need for an emphasis on agriculture by government and by the private sector. Many people who are from the farm communities point out appropriately that they provide thousands upon thousands of jobs and generate economic benefit for this province far beyond that for which they are given credit. It is because they are spread across the province that we tend to look at it with less importance than if it were concentrated in one area. I hope we are going to be out there to preserve the agricultural land that we have today.

1810

In the Niagara Peninsula, there are a number of people proposing new developments that would eat up that valuable agricultural land. It's valuable for two reasons: one, because of the fairly unique soil conditions which exist and, second and just as important, the fairly unique climatic conditions which exist. For instance, between the top of the escarpment and the bottom of the escarpment, on average, there are 27 more growing days for food.



That is why we are able to grow tender fruit in the Niagara Peninsula.

Members are aware that some of our wines which come from grapes in our area have been winning international awards. This very week there was an announcement out that in France, at one of the major ceremonies, one of the major wine-tasting events, Ontario wines were successful in winning some significant awards. That emphasizes the importance of that agricultural land.

I hope that local municipalities and the provincial government are both wise enough to preserve that land and not turn it over for a quick buck for developments that sound good but aren't always good in the long run, because I think that agricultural land can continue to produce jobs and economic activity for many, many years, which is of benefit to everybody in this province and allows us to meet our own needs in terms of the production of food.

I know that sometimes certain developers try to bypass local municipal councils and go directly to the provincial government to get permission to develop land. There is plenty of land in the province which is not of agricultural benefit and is available for development. I hope this government does not turn the keys over to the major developers who want to take good agricultural land and convert it to other purposes.

We have to, of course, support our farming community. You can't simply say to the farmers, "We want you to stay on the land, but we're not prepared to give you any kind of support," which is why I am prepared to see our government look at programs which can be of support to farmers in all parts of the province.

I look as well at natural resources and note that we have now seen some appointments to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and I see the hand of Bill Murdoch in some of these appointments. My friend Mr Murdoch is a person who has been long known for his views on the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Niagara Escarpment plan. I see a Mr Norman Seabrook, who has been appointed by the new guardian of the Niagara Escarpment, the Minister of Natural Resources. I can't help but believe that somehow Bill Murdoch, my friend from Grey-Owen Sound, had something to do with this appointment. Mr Seabrook, I understand, could not be defined as a preservationist when it comes to the lands of the Niagara Escarpment, nor would he be classified as a fan of the Niagara Escarpment Commission. So I want to say that my worst fears have been realized, that we are now having on the commission individuals whose first desire is not to protect the Niagara Escarpment plan and the Niagara Escarpment lands.

My friend from Grey-Owen Sound smiles widely as I say that in the House this afternoon and no doubt will utilize this Hansard to his benefit, but I want to say that it causes great angst in our part of the province. I believe the people who should have been appointed to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and would have been if Norm Sterling, the Minister of Environment and Energy, were in charge of it, are people who are going to protect the escarpment lands. Instead, we have turned it over to the Minister of Natural Resources, and that is of great concern.

I have a note coming in which may be of some importance. I cannot read this note. It has come from the other side, and it is of great significance. You know how when the Premier doesn't have an answer, one of the whiz kids sends a note in? This isn't from one of the whiz kids, I can tell you that. It's actually from my good friend the Solicitor General, who is in the House today. Unfortunately, I'm not able to speak on any areas of his jurisdiction, because I would be varying from the rules of the House and I certainly wouldn't want to do that.

The Minister of Education I notice is here as well. I am very concerned that school secretaries, caretakers, educational assistants and other non-instructional employees are going to have their jobs in jeopardy as there is a race to save money locally by privatizing and outsourcing these jobs. Anyone who is at all familiar with the education system knows that the school secretary, the head caretaker, the educational assistants, technicians and others are all part of the team, are all part of a group that is trying to deliver education services. I know the member for Burlington South, who is in the House and was a very credible education critic when he was in opposition, in his heart of hearts would probably agree with me because he would understand this, but I won't give him any angst about this by quoting him from the past and so on.

I see many members in the House. I don't think I need a quorum call, because my mind sees many members out there. I see a note that asks, do I want a quorum call? I know that those who are not in the House now are watching carefully on their monitors in their offices.

**Interjection:** They're at the trough, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm told they're at the trough, but I can't believe that could possibly be the case.

So I worry about that. I worry about how quickly the new curriculum is going to be implemented. I'm not saying that there shouldn't be a new curriculum. I think teachers, parents and others who are involved will say there is a need for a new curriculum; at least we always want to be looking at updating it. But to say that you're going to implement it in the fall, announcing it in late June, will not make for good implementation.

My complaint about this government, if it's a general one, is that it moves too rapidly and too recklessly and too drastically and doesn't take into account the ramifications of its actions.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** And those are the nice things you're saying.

**Mr Bradley:** And those are the nice things I'm saying, as the member for Burlington South says.

Even when I disagree, I think if you're going to do it, you should take your time and do it right. You have a five-year mandate to do it. There is lots of time left. You are only just past your second year of the mandate. Take your time and do it right instead of doing it quickly.

That's why we in the opposition are very concerned about the rules of the House, because we think that the rules as proposed by the government, by the Premier and his staff, will allow the government to move far more rapidly than previously and will not allow for the appropriate amount of consideration of all the policies and



programs and legislation that come before this House. If you take your time and do it right, if you give the people their day in court, if you consult widely and then you implement a bill, you will find it's a much better bill and a much better piece of legislation than it would have been had you decided that somehow you must rush something through. That's what I say about the curriculum.

I see now that the College of Teachers is being filled with a number of people. Some of them appear to be people who have nothing to do with education but have been prominent in Conservative circles over the years. That's one commission on which I think you should put people who are knowledgeable about education rather than someone else. There are some boards or commissions where you don't need a specific knowledge of that area, just general good common sense, I guess you would say, but I suggest to you that the commission I am making reference to, the College of Teachers, should have people who are knowledgeable in that field and not simply those who have done favours for the Conservative Party over the years.

1820

We have a new piece of legislation, Bill 136, which has not been called by the government for consideration on second reading. I understand that will probably be in the August session. That again is one that starts to abrogate the rights of individuals in terms of their ability to deal in collective bargaining. The best kinds of agreements are reached in what I call free and unfettered collective bargaining, where both sides sit down at the table, there's some give and take, there's a realistic look at the circumstances out there and an agreement is reached. The atmosphere of the employees related to their employers is far better when that happens. But this government has put before this House a bill that I know school secretaries, caretakers, non-instructional assistants, people in the police forces, fire departments and civic employees are all going to be concerned about and should be concerned about.

I want to say as well that when we're dealing with matters of this kind, it's interesting to note how people react to them. The government now has a number of dissidents within its caucus. I refer to the person I referred to previously, Bill Murdoch, who has from time to time expressed openly his concern about the direction in which the government is moving. Gary Carr, the member for Oakville South, is another, and Toni Skarica, the member for Wentworth North. Morley Kells has written some interesting pieces in the Toronto Star. There will be others perhaps behind closed doors who are expressing their concerns. I encourage them to do so, not simply because it's in the interests of the opposition — that's a factor, without a doubt — but because I think it's in the interests of good government to have people from all sides challenging those who are in authority, those who have the power.

I lament, as I have on many occasions, what is happening with governments around the world, and certainly this government fits that description. They are concentrating more power in the hands of unelected advisers to the Premier than in the members of the legislative body, a body which is elected and therefore can be fired by the

people of this province if it is not doing the appropriate job. When I look at the rule changes that are proposed, I see a significant diminishing of the role of this Legislature. It will be more efficient, without a doubt, it will work more like a business, no doubt, but it will not provide as good government.

There is a difference between business and government, and there should be. I don't expect, Mr Speaker, as you wouldn't, the business person to run her or his business the same way we run a legislative body, because decisions are required more rapidly in business, because it does things in a different way, because it is private money which is involved.

In the legislative body, we are governing for all the people of this province. That's why it's important that we not relegate question period, for instance, way into the afternoon. On some days it might not even exist. If there were enough matters that took place before the seventh spot, which is question period, we could not have a question period at all, because at 4 o'clock the government will start its business, no matter what. That's another new rule that would be there.

All of us who want to put questions on the order paper — and that's something each one of us can do, to put a question on the order paper to get some information that maybe a minister hasn't been forthcoming with, maybe some information that's useful to our riding or our area of interest. That's going to be severely restricted under these new rules, and the time for reply is severely restricted. So the general direction in which these rules are moving is to allow the government to move far more rapidly, far more drastically and without as much scrutiny as we would like to see.

That is why this afternoon in this assembly you saw the official opposition take matters into its hands, I think in a very orderly fashion, by bringing the rules of the House across to the Premier of this province, to say: "Mr Premier, these rules are in your hands. If you change them in the way you are suggesting, if you change them in the way the motion you have before this Legislature states, then virtually all power will reside in the Premier and those who advise him." That's why, symbolically, we walked one by one as the Liberal caucus across the floor and placed those rules there and proceeded out the door for the remainder of question period. Why question period? Why not another time? Well, question period is one of the areas most adversely impacted.

This is not action you take lightly. This is extraordinary action. It was not riotous, it was not rambunctious, but it was extraordinary. The reason we took that action was to focus attention on the issue. It was interesting that previously the leader of the NDP, the leader of the Liberal Party and others, myself included, had asked questions about rule changes in this House. There was virtually no coverage of that in the popular news media. When we had a special occasion in this House, an extraordinary action on the part of the official opposition, then there was plenty of media attention outside. It's a dry subject by its very nature and people out there don't think they are directly affected, but anyone who could be impacted by any legislation in this province should know that the rules under which we work are the most import-



ant thing they have to protect them, the most important bulwark against a government moving far too quickly and far too drastically.

A government that is elected, particularly one which has an overwhelming majority, such as the present administration, ultimately has the right to pass that legislation. That's not something with which I would quarrel, because that is the decision of the electorate. But I think the electorate also wants members of this assembly to ensure that there is due consideration of those bills, of that legislation, of those policies. The only way that can be done is to slow the government down and, on rare occasions, perhaps for a very short period of time, to bring the government to a stop, so it can reconsider, so it can do things right instead of doing things quickly, and I think we provide a service to the people of this province when we do so.

I know I have about 58 seconds left at this time and I want to say as I wind down that another area I hope the government will consider more carefully is that of casino gambling and video lottery terminals. I noticed today the government was talking about some kind of referendum across the province before we see more casinos. I'm going to tell you, the charity casinos, although they help charities from time to time, have a lot of detrimental parts to them and many communities have said, "Please don't put them in our community." I know there are some members of the government caucus and certainly the opposition who are very concerned about the placement of electronic slot machines, video lottery terminals, in bars and restaurants across this province.

I welcome the opportunity to canvass some of these issues. Under the present rules, I'm able to do so. Under the new rules, we would be restricted from doing what we have been doing this afternoon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Further debate?

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I appreciate the opportunity to put a few thoughts on the record here this afternoon on this occasion as we debate major changes to the way we operate in this province and to some of the traditions that we've held near and dear to the good functioning of a jurisdiction such as the province of Ontario in a country so modern and civilized as Canada.

This afternoon we're discussing the issue of supply, which gives members a chance to wheel a bit on a number of ministries and a number of issues. I will pick but a couple to talk about and expand some thought on here this evening so that folks out there might know of my position on various issues that confront us as a government in this the 20th century, as we head towards the millennium and as we struggle to make sense out of an economy that is changing faster than some of us can think sometimes, in a world that grows smaller by the day because of the new technologies we have at our disposal, because of the new ways we have of communicating and travelling, not at all like the world that some of us inherited and most of our parents inherited.

Today I want to express my disappointment, my dismay, my general lack of enthusiasm for some of what this government is doing in the name of governing in this province. I want to say, as my leader has said so often on

the issue of democracy, this government feels very simply that when an election happens and the people of a jurisdiction go to the polls and one party wins, that's it; the party that wins has a free rein to do whatever it wants for the four or five years of its term.

**1830**

We are seeing an example of that in Ontario today, where this government, led by Premier Mike Harris, being elected to take the reins of power in Ontario in 1995, decided that it was going to implement its agenda, its Common Sense Revolution, its right-wing foray into the common good of this province come hell or high water, regardless of the opposition or anybody else who might have a good idea. To that end, nothing is beyond sacrifice. Democracy for a government of that ilk begins and ends on election day. In between, it's just a question of how much you can get for yourself, how much power you can take to yourself, how much change you can make to the ideological bent of your particular group of followers, and no thought at all for the carnage that creates.

I want to talk for a few minutes at the outset about the ministry I am a critic for — that's the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism — and the lack of real attention the present minister is paying to that very important piece of work that must go on, that government has a tremendous responsibility to take some leadership on in this province and the very cold, calculated reliance that simply the marketplace will take care of business, that we will buy into what's happening out there by way of the global economy, that we will buy into what's happening out there by way of what money can make happen and not pay any attention at all to the question of how that plays out in the lives of the ordinary citizen, how that lends itself to viable and vital and alive communities of people looking after each other, making sure we all have the wherewithal to live fruitful and productive lives, making sure there is available to every citizen in a jurisdiction that's governed the wherewithal to get an education, to make a living, to have health care when it's needed, to look after our elderly and to make sure everybody in that jurisdiction has an opportunity to offer the gifts they have, that they are, to the production of the goods of that society and to benefit from that.

I think it's despicable, to say the least, that the minister in charge of economic development and trade in this province seems to spend more time outside the province than he does inside the province and that he doesn't seem to have any real understanding of the impact —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Martin:** There's music playing.

**Mr Bradley:** The national anthem.

**Mr Martin:** The national anthem is playing.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** It's only fitting.

**Mr Martin:** It's only fitting in this time when anything national seems to be under attack in this province. Anything good and wonderful that particular piece of music draws out of us is seemingly fragile and weak in front of the agenda of this particular government at this point in time.

I was saying, before I got distracted somewhat by the music that floated in here as the door was open, that the



Ministry of Economic Development and Trade is probably, for me, because I'm focused on that more than any other, the epitome of the inaction of this government in the area of making sure we have an economy that works for everybody, that we have an economy that works for communities, that we have an economy that is built on and works for people.

Nobody will deny that in Ontario today, in Canada today, we are doing quite well actually, and some of our larger corporations, financial institutions, are making very good profits. As a matter of fact, as you read the annual statements that come out of a lot of these corporations, we find and we see that some of them are making historically record high profits.

The question that people like myself and others who care about community, who care about people and who care about the creation and the maintenance of jobs are asking is, is that good fortune, that good result of effort by a few people, playing itself out so that more and more of the citizens of Ontario are better off as time unfolds?

We find a bit of a juxtaposition here. We have on one hand an economy that if you read the financial pages of our national newspapers is doing quite well, and the signs and predictions are that it will continue to do quite well and perhaps even do better, while on the other hand we have communities that are struggling, communities that are being asked more and more to do more and more by this government, but with less and less, because the fruits of the economic system that we are evolving into are not being distributed in a way that allows for communities to take care of the needs of their citizens.

So we have communities in distress, communities that are competing with each other for scarce opportunities to have new businesses locate in their jurisdictions. We have communities that are concerned about jobs for their people.

In my own community of Sault Ste Marie, one of the issues in the federal election that just passed was youth employment. We have some wonderfully gifted, talented, highly motivated young people coming out of Sault Ste Marie, working their way through the school system. Then at the end of the day, when they have their education and they're at the beginning of their productive life in terms of the economy, they can't find a job in their home town, in their home city. They have to go someplace else to find one.

Even in going someplace else, they find sometimes that's a difficult proposition. Not so long ago, two, three, five years ago, one could expect that if you worked hard, got a good education and applied oneself, in not too short an order you could find something that you could plug into and use your gift and your skill, and work your way up a ladder that was predictable, have some stability in your life, think about the possibility of perhaps one day getting married and having a family, establishing yourself in a community like Manitowadge or Marathon or Elliot Lake or Sault Ste Marie, buy a home, invest in some property, become a taxpayer, maybe even after getting established in one's career and getting on with the beginnings of a family and owning your own home, considering the possibility of getting involved in the life of the community in a more significant and meaningful way.

That's not happening today. Our young people are concerned, our young people are worried, because the economy doesn't seem to be working for them. All they can see around them, all they can see their friends and colleagues doing and having are part-time jobs, jobs at a very low wage level, jobs with little or no benefit packages, not to speak of a pension plan of any sort, and they despair of ever being able to do that which we all took for granted, which this government accused previous governments of not being concerned about.

I have to tell you, as I look around me today and as I sit and talk with young people about what they see as their future and as I worry personally myself about the future for my own four children, I have to say that under this government the scene, the future, the picture they have to look at and that I have to look at for them seems less and less clear and more and more dark and worrisome.

What do we do? We have a government that seemingly doesn't care, or if it does care, at least isn't willing to take the leadership required, isn't willing to grab the responsibility it was given on June 8, 1995, to develop an economy or even to take advantage of an economy that is steaming along, to make sure the fruits of that economy are spread in a way that speaks of opportunity for all and an equitable distribution of that opportunity to everybody concerned. That's unfortunate.

**1840**

People out there often talk about the years 1990-95 when Bob Rae was the Premier and the NDP was the government and the challenges we faced. We're often accused of being irresponsible in many ways. I have to tell you, in those days, particularly in my own circumstance and in my community, there was a lot more sunshine, a lot more opportunity, a lot more hope than there is today, because at least in those days the people of Ontario knew they had a government that cared, knew they had a government that understood the need to make sure that whatever wealth was generated in this province by the economy was distributed in a way that saw everybody having some opportunity to take advantage of it, to better themselves or to participate in some constructive way or to be part of creating something new.

That's not the case today. That isn't what's happening in Ontario today. I talked to some of the people involved in the very important and onetime vital area of community economic development. They tell me they don't know where to turn in the climate we have today in the province. Where at one point they felt they were a partner in a larger scheme that included the provincial government in a very significant way, that seems to be dissipating. The sand seems to be shifting. There doesn't seem to be any real foundation any more for any long-term planning or development when it comes to economic development and the import that has for so many communities that are concerned about it across this province.

There are some wonderful people in the province, some very gifted and talented people, who really want to be part of the development of an economy that's about people and jobs for people, that's about stability and long-term growth, that's about the common good, the common aspirations of everybody who calls this province



home and chooses to live and work and play and carry on their life functions here. I have to say to the folks out there, from my two years — it was two years last June 8 — of sitting in this place watching this government operate in my position as critic for the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, none of that is happening.

As I said, we have an economy that for all intents and purposes is doing well, is plugged into the global reality — Brian Mulroney made sure that happened — but it's not concerned about the people it's supposed to serve, so people are suffering.

We don't have to look very far to see some of the victims of the decisions very clearly made by a government that doesn't care much about people, that is more concerned about the wellbeing of the corporate sector, of the well-off, of the well-heeled as opposed to those of us who see ourselves as middle-class Canadians, as working-class people who get up every morning and look forward to putting in a good eight or 10 or 12 hours of effort, to being paid for that and through that paying our taxes, paying the mortgage on the house, putting food on the table for our children, educating our children and participating in the lives of our communities.

We don't have to look very far to see who the victims and the targets of this government are, to see who this government sees in its plan as dispensable in this province. There is a goodly number of people who are dispensable, who have become victims, who have been thrown on the garbage pile of life by this government.

I never fail to mention, when I get on my feet in this place, that fateful day in July 1995 when I woke up to listen to the announcement on the radio that this government, just given the powers of office for two months, had decided to take 22% of the income away from the poorest and the most vulnerable of people in this province — no thought of the impact, no thought of how they would cope, no thought of talking to people and figuring out how we might put in place supports that would help those people as they lost almost a third of their income, no thought to the fact that there were no jobs out there for these people to go to.

The ideology of the folks across the way is that there are jobs out there for folks on welfare in this province, that if they'd only get off their duffs and get out there and put a little effort in they will find work. We know, those of us who have been paying attention, that in this country and in this province the unemployment rate across this province has been anywhere from 9% to 11%, depending on the way the wind is blowing, for the last number of years. This government unilaterally and in a very decisive and narrow way decided that a price had to be paid for the cost of being government in this province by those who are most vulnerable and most at risk among us — and such a price: 21%.

If you woke up one day and your employer had decided to cut almost a third of your income, with not even the courtesy to make a personal phone call but you had to read about it in the paper or heard it on the radio first thing, imagine how you would feel and how you would adapt and how you would adjust, given that you know, because you've beat the pavement for the last two

or three years or two or three months looking for work, that there was no work out there. But you still had to put food on the table for your children and you still had to pay the rent or the mortgage and you still had to pay for the clothing your children need to go to school and survive the winters we have in this province.

They were just the first group that were the target of this government as it went about its mean-spirited way in downsizing government, in taking government out of, as you say, the lives of people in this province, a government that is needed in the lives of so many who can't cope on their own.

That was just the first foray. Not long after that, you began to cut services. In my community alone you took away from hundreds of people the work they'd done for years. These weren't just people who one day decided to do this and another day decided to do that and another day decided to do something else. These are people who had prepared themselves for a career in serving people, whether it was as teachers or as social workers or in the health care field. They spent literally years of their lives preparing themselves to the best they could be, taking courses in the evening, taking courses on weekends, taking courses during the summertime so they could learn the best there was out there to offer to those people they served in their jobs. They took great pride in the work they did.

They were hurt deeply by the lack of support and confidence and understanding of the very important service they provided to the communities all of us represent and live in and love in this province. This government just went about in its day-to-day, blasé way: Cut here, cut there, cut someplace else.

We've asked in this place for an impact study: When does this become counterproductive? By cutting so much out of the income of the very lowest-paid among us, by cutting the services they rely on and, in doing that, taking away the jobs people participate in for their livelihood, when does this all become counterproductive? Where's the impact study? What is this going to produce in the end? Where are these people who used to be social workers and health care providers and teachers going to get new jobs? Put them together with the people you've kicked off the social service rolls, with the already unemployed out there looking for work who are on EI, and where do these people find work?

1850

If they can't find work in the field they've chosen to prepare themselves for, that they've educated themselves in, how do they and where do they get the education they require to adjust to the new realities or the new challenges or the new opportunities that you say are out there — which we sometimes have a hard time identifying — when one of the things you did soon after you cut the income of the lowest among us and cut the jobs of primarily social workers was to take direct aim at the education system?

You cut literally millions of dollars out of the budgets of community colleges, of universities and out of the school systems, the elementary and secondary school systems across this province, systems that were put in place to prepare people for the workaday world, systems



that were put in place so people who found themselves so radically out of work, caused by your government, could be retrained to take advantage of new opportunities. You've cut that to the bone.

In my own community of Sault Ste Marie, you've cut literally millions of dollars out of the budget of Sault College, so it's had to drop 10 of its full-time course offerings, probably 10 to 15 all told, if it was put together in a way that expressed the reality. Students in our area who want to take the courses Sault College used to offer last year will now have to either take other courses that would be their second or third choice, because a lot of students today, as you know, just cannot pick up and leave. They have families. They are students who have worked for a time and now want to change careers or, because of what you're doing as a government, are being forced into changing careers. They can't just, like teenagers and students of a few years ago who were in their twenties — you know, we moved around the province and took courses here and there, wherever we could find them. Students can't do that any more. The money isn't there to afford them that luxury.

The institution that when it was first established in our area was a beacon of hope, an exciting opportunity, something those of us who worked in it or took advantage of it saw as a fundamental piece of being a vital and viable community, is now under attack. I suggest it is under such duress that who knows whether it and so many other very valuable community colleges across this province will survive?

That's not to mention the impact this has on some of the smaller communities around Sault Ste Marie. I worked for Sault College back in the early 1970s when it came into places like Wawa and White River and Hornepayne and Dubreuilville and Blind River and Elliot Lake and the north shore of Lake Huron and provided opportunities for people they never had before to take courses that upgraded them in how to run organizations, how to participate in local government, how to be better prepared to take care of the health needs of their family members by way of first-aid programs. Many people had their mental health improved because of some of the recreational type of programs they took which showed them how to make better use of time they had at their disposal, so they didn't become such a drain so often on the health care system.

That's just one small example of the impact of the decisions of this government to have government become smaller and less influential and less involved in the lives of the communities and people in this province; just a small example of the fallout of the people targeted, of the victims of a government that is so caught into an economic system, that does not concern itself at all about the redistribution of the wealth that is generated, that does not concern itself at all about anything other than the profits of the corporations, and that does not concern itself at all about anything except that we somehow are in sync with the new global reality where the economy is concerned.

An economy, as I said before, has to be first and foremost about and for people. If it's not doing that, the community of people it serves begins to fray at the edges,

and eventually that falling apart moves closer and closer to the heart of the system. If we continue down this road, if we continue to support and be led by this government that seems to be on this very narrow track for a further length of time than is absolutely necessary, I suggest that's exactly what's going to happen.

One could talk for hours and go through each of the government ministries we're talking about tonight by way of this concurrence in supply motion. I hit on two that I feel are fundamental and central to the good governing of this province, of any jurisdiction that calls itself an advanced and civilized society today.

I talked about the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and the lack of leadership being shown, the lack of responsibility the minister in particular is showing in not putting in place new programs that will help communities take advantage of the new economy that's evolving, some of the good news that's at one end of this dichotomy we seem to have in front of us today. I talked a bit about the fact that this minister and this government find themselves so focused on the global economic reality that they have forgotten about the people they were elected to serve.

If you continue down that road and you forget about the people you're serving and continue to hack away at the Ministry of Education and Training and continue to show a lack of leadership and responsibility in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the people of this province will do as they've done to other governments over the years who didn't pay attention, who didn't do what was, in their view, in their best interests, you will be looking for at work. You will be the next group of people to be the target of what your government is doing. You will find yourself out there looking for some way to participate in the economy of this province.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It's certainly a pleasure to rise in the House to speak on this motion of concurrence.

This government has set a new standard in Ontario's history for fiscal responsibility, and it has taken decisive and innovative action to address our long-standing financial problems. This evening, I will be taking some time to review some of those accomplishments and to examine just how we measure up to other jurisdictions in North America when it comes to fiscal responsibility.

I can't overstress how extremely important it is that we be fiscally responsible, whether it be in our families and our family incomes and budgets, whether it be in our small business or large business, or whether it be in operating a government here in Ontario or in Canada. Unfortunately, in many of the developed countries of the world in the last few decades we've lost track of the importance of fiscal responsibility, and today we're paying the cost of that through debt and deficit and the interest to service that debt.

It is no secret that for years previous governments racked up enormous debts in Ontario. It took a while, but those debts and the tax-and-spend-and-borrow policies eventually did take their toll. When we took office in 1995, we found a province shouldering almost \$100 billion in accumulated debt, we found a province spending \$8 billion a year in interest payments alone and we



found a province where investment and job growth had literally flown the coop. In fact growth, personal initiative and entrepreneurship had been stifled — stifled by one of the highest tax burdens on the continent. But what a difference just two years can make.

**1900**

The Fraser Institute performance index ranks provinces and states according to their taxation and spending policies. Governments that earn high grades do so by cutting spending and also cutting taxes, and I'm delighted to be able to report to the House this evening that for 1996, Ontario ranked second, just behind New York state, for a midterm government performance. By midterm, I mean governments that came into power after fiscal year 1993-94.

In fact, the government of Ontario collected \$1,743 less in revenue from the average family of four in fiscal 1996-97 than it did through 1995-96. If we were a corporation, that indeed would not be good news, but since we're a government committed to restoring hope and prosperity through lower taxes, it is indeed very good news. I'm also pleased to note that Alberta ranked number one in the established or long-term government performance, and that's another Canadian success story.

Fiscal conservatism is on the rise in both Canada and throughout the US. That makes these standings even more impressive. By 1995, 21 states had moved to cut taxes. This is indeed good news. However, to add to this, growth of government in the US had also stopped. Last year the tax cuts continued, with 27 governors recommending lower taxes in their budgets. Along with these tax cuts, no state has recently enacted a major tax increase and almost all have passed balanced budget laws.

We compete with these various states, and it's certainly interesting to hear Bob Rae in a recent speech make the comment on just how we end up competing with those various states. I quote from one of his speeches:

"The comparisons that we make between Oshawa and Newmarket are irrelevant. The comparison between Oshawa and a jurisdiction in Tennessee or in New Mexico or Mexico or anywhere else, that's the comparison that matters and that's the test that will be applied."

Fortunately, in Canada the story is much the same. In fact, all provincial governments have embraced the wisdom of balanced budgets, including those provinces with Liberal or NDP governments. Even former Premier Bob Rae has apparently seen the light just a little bit too late, but we'll talk more about that in a few minutes.

While Ontario is still the only province that has cut taxes significantly, tax freedom day is coming a little earlier in a number of provinces right across this country. Tax freedom day is an interesting concept, one this government takes very seriously, which puts in perspective very easily just how many taxes are being taken from the average citizen in this country. It identifies the day in the year that Canadians stop working to support the government and start working to support themselves, start working to stimulate the economy. The dollars they earn after that date have a ripple effect on the economy, the opposite of where taxes are an anchor to drag them back.

Tax freedom day represents the enormous cumulative tax burden borne by Canadians across this land and it

adds up very clearly what we pay for each level of government. The list is frightening. Canadians pay taxes on their income, taxes on their purchases. We pay gasoline taxes, excise taxes, property taxes and import duties. Then there's social security taxes, pension taxes and medical insurance taxes. Of course, that list seems to go on forever, and indeed with the taxes that we pay in this province it really does.

Of these, Ontario's tax burden was traditionally the highest. Total taxes for a family earning \$60,000 in the mid-1990s were more than \$29,000, almost half their total income. Until 1995, at least here in Ontario, governments could never seem to get enough taxes.

Using the benchmarks established to identify tax freedom day, it's easy to see the steady rise in our tax burden. Back in 1961, tax freedom day in Canada was May 3. So from May 4 on, almost eight months, you got to earn some money to put in your own pocket. By 1974 tax freedom day had advanced to June 8 and by 1996 it had advanced to June 25 for Canada as a country.

I'm sure it would be interesting for the members of this House to realize that here in Ontario, from 1981 to 1985, it actually moved from May 28 to May 25. This was a saving of some three days that people were then able to earn and put in their pockets and that was during a PC government. But then from 1985 to 1995, Ontario's tax freedom day was delayed by over a month, going from May 25 in 1985 to June 26 in 1995. I'm sure I don't have to point out that coincidentally that is the same period of time the tax-and-spend Liberals and the NDP held power in this province.

Now if you break that down from 1985 to 1990, it actually moved from May 25 to June 21. That was an increase of some 27 days that the provincial Liberals were able to move the tax freedom day here in Ontario. If you move along between 1990 and 1995, it moved from June 21 to June 26. That's an increase of some five days. Now I stand here and ask which is worse, the increase in taxation the Liberals laid on us or what the NDP did to us by just escalating the debt to such an extreme extent?

I heard earlier the member for Lake Nipigon criticizing the borrowing of this government to make up for the deficit.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** Of all people to be talking. He sucked every ounce of milk out of the provincial trough.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, order, order.

**Mr Galt:** At the same time, he also criticized the tax cut. But you have to come up with some sort of balance. You can't criticize —

**Mr Conway:** How many of those pay raises did you send back to the department of agriculture?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North.

**Mr Conway:** You've got your nerve.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North. The member for Northumberland.

**Mr Galt:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's obvious that the truth is kind of getting to the opposition.

I also heard the member for Sault Ste Marie say that they were being accused of being irresponsible. I can



understand why he would be sensitive to that, because they've often been accused of being irresponsible and rightly so. He talked about a civilized society. I can't think of a more civilized society than to leave a few tax dollars in people's pockets.

In 1996, that date of June 26 remained the same in Ontario because the effect of tax cuts had not kicked in. So when the tax freedom day is —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, order, order.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** This is what evening sessions will be like.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Algoma.

**Mr Conway:** He had all kinds of time on company time to complain about Elmer Buchanan.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North, we're just waiting for you. The member for Northumberland.

**Mr Galt:** It's a shame, Mr Speaker. When the truth comes out, the opposition has some real trouble handling it. Anyway, that just happens to be the way it is.

My colleagues across the floor are fond of repeating their mantra that tax cuts only benefit our rich friends. I don't know about anyone else, but let me assure you that any rich friends I happen to have went out of business during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, when the taxes were going up and you just kept right on —

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*Interjections.*

**Mr Wildman:** And you kept calling because you were at the public trough.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** The doctor could have said no.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. It was so peaceful for a while. It was so peaceful. The members for Kingston and The Islands, Lake Nipigon, Sudbury East.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North.

**Mr Galt:** The fact is that tax cuts benefit the low- and middle-income earners the most. They're restoring hope and opportunity to great numbers of people who had all but given up hope in Ontario. Is there anything more bizarre in this province today than to listen to some politicians ridicule the importance of a tax cut? Tax cuts aren't worth it, they say, because they only put a few dollars per week back into people's pockets. They aren't worth it, they say, for all of the suffering, and of course they say it isn't worth it because they only benefit the rich. Wrong, wrong, wrong, on all three accounts.

The tax cuts we are delivering are an essential ingredient in putting Ontario's fiscal house back in order. They represent a commitment to take less to begin with and to spend what is taken more prudently. I can assure the opposition that there is no such thing as government dollars; there are only taxpayers' dollars.

I really sincerely thank both parties in opposition for advertising our tax cuts, because without their advertising about the tax cuts, I don't think they'd have ever been nearly as successful.

Tax cuts are a way to put government free spenders on an enforced diet but, most of all, tax cuts are a way to

restore business and consumer confidence in an economy that was indeed badly shaken. The power of tax cuts is absolutely phenomenal, and it's obvious here this evening that it's really upsetting to the opposition to see just how successful they've been. We have all kinds of evidence to indicate just how successful they have been.

In March and April, Ontario's economy created some 60,000 new jobs. That works out to just about 1,000 jobs for every day of the week during those two months. We then moved into May, when there were some 60,000 jobs created across Canada, 40,000 here in Ontario, a province that's a third of the size of Canada creating two thirds of the jobs. There's got to be something right going on in this province for that many jobs to be created. What's more, the Ontario help wanted index grew some 18% over last year. We haven't seen that kind of increase in a dog's age, and I can tell you, when that happened last time, some 200,000 new jobs were created.

Housing starts are also up significantly, particularly in Toronto and the GTA. Labour income is up. Car sales are up. Department store sales are up. Exports are up, not to mention the gross domestic product.

In my home riding of Northumberland, the news is also very positive.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** There are too many discussions going on. The member for Northumberland has the floor.

**Mr Galt:** According to Manpower Temporary Services, which conducts a quarterly employment outlook survey, 26% of employers surveyed said they intend to hire new employees in the next three months, while only 10% expected a decrease in employment.

Housing starts were also up. In Cobourg, year-over-year construction permits increased almost \$3 million over last year. In April, year-to-date construction permits had almost tripled, from \$2.3 million in 1996 to almost \$6 million in April 1997. That indeed is a strong sign that consumers are back in the driver's seat, where consumers rightfully should be.

I know that my colleagues opposite will say it's the low interest rates that are helping to fuel this recovery. While I agree low interest rates certainly help, let us point out that people aren't totally naïve. They know that interest rates can jump at any time; as a matter of fact, they move on a weekly basis. You know that as well as I do. But I can also tell you that a tax cut is seen as a permanent saving and people recognize it, and that's why we're on the recovery in this province. What's more, in light of the high levels of taxation we've seen in this province, I'd say they're crucial to renewed growth.

That brings me to the comments — and I'm sure members of the third party would be interested — Mr Rae made to the municipal associations just a few weeks ago. When I first heard that Mr Rae approved of some of our policies, I wasn't sure whether I should be pleased or alarmed at this prospect. But when I read the transcripts of his remarks, I became much more comfortable with the notion and with his ideas. In fact, what Mr Rae said made perfect sense. He pointed out that we have to stop thinking in terms of competing within Ontario and Canada and we have to start thinking about competing



with Ohio and Michigan and overseas. I just couldn't agree more.

I also found extremely interesting Mr Rae's comment that "there are limits to what the government can spend, there are limits to what the government can borrow and there are limits to what the government can tax." Hallelujah. There's none more righteous than this fiscal sinner who has finally seen the light, and those indeed are very righteous words.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Never worked a day in his life.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Galt:** I'm quoting from Bob Rae's book:

"Ontario was not seen as hungry enough for new business and new investment. Bureaucracy was too big and inefficient. We were lousy marketers. American states were much better at being aggressive and attracting new jobs. We were overtaxed and overregulated.... These were not things that New Democrats liked to admit to ourselves, though they were increasingly obvious to most people."

Page 224, if you would like to read it.

As I look at this, "Ontario was not seen as hungry enough for new business and new investment" — not surprising. "Bureaucracy was too big and inefficient." There was a 20,000 increase while you were in office. "We were lousy marketers." Obvious. "American states were much better at being aggressive and attracting new jobs." With the kind of red tape you brought in, not surprising.

**Mr Laughren:** So where did you work? Tell us about the private sector.

**Mr Galt:** I can. For eight years I practised in Seaforth and in Napanee, if you'd like to know where I practised. I was raised on a farm, and I can tell you what hard work is all about. Can you tell me what you've worked at, other than being —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Pouliot:** You must have had a summer job at one time. You should stick to your script; you will get confused.

**Mr Laughren:** It's time you got a job. You've got to get a real job.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Galt:** I know the members opposite will be anxious, of course, to defend their former leader. I'm not surprised at all and I wouldn't deny them that opportunity and that privilege. So maybe I'll just wrap up by saying that we came to Queen's Park with a mission, and we're here with some very clear instructions from the electorate. We knew something had to be fixed, with the problems we inherited coming to office: the problems of big government, big deficit, big debt and even bigger taxes. For too long Ontario governments financed their deficits by increasing job-killing taxes rather than bringing spending under control.

We are now controlling that spending, we are now reducing those taxes and we're now addressing the overtaxation of the past. What's more, our plan to reinvest in priority programs and boost job growth is

working. Reducing the size and cost of government is having the desired effect, and we are getting our fiscal house in order, even though the opposition like to criticize what we're doing.

This sound management is refuelling renewed optimism in Ontario. We have had impressive job gains, a jump in housing starts and a return of consumer confidence and investors. Yes, we prescribed some tough medicine for a patient that's been in terrible shape, and we're getting the patient of Ontario back on its feet. I can tell you that medicine is indeed working.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Galt:** Even though you haven't had an honest job throughout your life, don't criticize others.

Independent forecasts predict continued strong growth for the foreseeable future, and that is indeed something to celebrate. As a wise man once said, "Problems are nothing more than opportunities dressed up in working clothes." I believe we have taken the substantial financial problems facing this province and we have turned them around. I'm proud to be a member of this government, committed as ever to the Common Sense Revolution and doing what is right for the province.

**1920**

**Mr Gerretsen:** There is one issue I like talking about more than any other issue, and that's the tax cut. Let's just put it straight on the record. Nobody wouldn't like a tax cut. The problem is that we can't afford the tax cut right now.

Let me go over some of the figures again for the members of the back bench. They obviously forget that when they took over, they took over a \$100-billion debt. Let's again state for the record that \$40 billion of that \$100-billion debt was incurred by the Conservatives prior to 1985, \$10 billion of it was incurred between 1985 and 1990 when the Liberals were in power, and another \$45 billion to \$50 billion was incurred while the NDP was in power. Those are the facts. Look at the government's own information: a \$100-billion debt.

According to the government's own budget document, what is going to happen to the public debt in this province over the next four to five years? It's going to increase from \$100 billion, where it was when they took over, to \$120 billion in another two to three years. You are going to add \$20 billion to the public debt of this province, which just happens to equate to the amount of the tax cut over those five years. It's in your own document.

Let's take a look at how much interest we're paying on the public debt right now. It's \$9.1 billion. Even with the lowering of interest rates that we're all enjoying in this province, it's still \$9.1 billion per year, up from the \$7.1 billion when you took over. By your actions, by your tax cut, you have added another \$2 billion to the public interest payment of the province. That's what's happened, and I think the people of Ontario should clearly understand that.

For a party that likes to promote itself as the business party, as far as the average Ontarian is concerned, you are taking some very anti-business approaches. I know of no company that would issue itself a dividend while it's



still running in the red on a year-to-year basis, and you're doing it.

**Mr Galt:** That's a dividend, cutting taxes?

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's right. You are giving the people of Ontario a dividend, but you're in the red every year. It clearly indicates that.

What does it mean to the average Ontarian? I happen to have a study here that was done by KPMG. This isn't our propaganda, this is a highly respected consulting firm, Pearn Marwick, and what do they say? They say that this coming year, a person who has a taxable income of \$25,000 can expect to receive a tax cut of \$295 for the year, which works out to about \$5 a week; a person who has a taxable income of \$50,000 is going to get a tax cut of about \$890; but a person who makes \$100,000 is going to get a tax cut of slightly less than \$2,500 per year. Those figures indicate that the people who are going to benefit most from the tax cut are clearly the people who are better off in this province. Why don't you put that straight up front in your propaganda so you don't have the people who make \$25,000 or \$30,000 believing they are going to get a huge tax cut when we're talking about \$5 to \$6 a week?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** John, what about the Fair Share health levy? Tell them about that.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You'll have your time, Minister. After the NDP has their turn, we'll be more than pleased to listen to your analysis of this. I'm using your own documents to indicate that you are still adding to the public debt of this province and that you are also, as a result of your actions, adding to the public interest payment some \$2 billion on an annual basis over the last two years alone. That's even in a period when the interest rates are at an all-time low.

Let's talk about some of the other deficits you are incurring in this province. The deficit we like to talk about on this side of the House is the so-called human deficit your actions are imposing on the residents of the province.

Let's take a look at some of the hospitals scheduled to close over the next year or so. In Thunder Bay we have three hospitals; in Sudbury we have two hospitals; in Ottawa we have four hospitals. I guess the Montfort Hospital may be saved or it may reappear in a different manner than it is right now, but as of the publication of this document, it was certainly included on the hit list. In Pembroke, the Pembroke Civic Hospital is scheduled to close. In London two hospitals scheduled to close, the St Thomas Psychiatric Hospital and the London Psychiatric Hospital. In Metro Toronto, about 10 hospitals scheduled to close. That's what your tax cut is doing.

The people of Ontario want proper health care, they want accessible health care, and from everything we've heard, everything I've heard in my own riding and throughout the province, they certainly don't expect the hospitals in their own communities to close, hospitals which in many cases have been there for many years, that have been built as a result of the tremendous efforts of volunteers from those communities who have literally spent generations trying to get the best kind of health

care they possibly could in individual communities. What are you doing? So you can afford your tax cut, you are closing these institutions one by one throughout the entire province.

But it's not only the institutions being closed. One of the other effects your cuts are having is that something like 12,300 health care workers who are providing good-quality patient care to Ontarians will be laid off, and we expect another 15,000 will lose their jobs directly as a result of hospital restructuring.

Of course we haven't even talked about the user fees you have imposed throughout this entire province, user fees on prescription drugs for seniors, persons with disabilities and the poor. Those are some of the effects your tax cuts are having.

Let's talk about some other areas. How about education? What is happening to education as a result of your tax cut? Some \$145 million already has been cut to junior kindergarten and \$150 million in cuts to adult education. You may recall that two or three days ago people involved in adult education programs here in the city of Toronto surrounded this building, asking to meet with the minister so they could explain their own individual positions, what the lack of funding to adult education is doing to their own individual lives.

**1930**

As a party that believes that everyone should contribute to the prosperity of this province and that people should lead as full a life as possible, one would think you would be helping these people to get the right kind of educational skills and life skills to get proper jobs and get off the welfare system they're currently involved with. One would think you would be the party that would fund those programs, would help these people get the necessary life skills and educational requirements to get the jobs that are out there, but you've done exactly the opposite. You are punishing these people by your cuts to the adult education programs. The minister is shaking his head no, but he knows I'm right.

Yes, \$39 million has been cut in school bus transportation alone, \$163 million in cuts to classroom education and another \$167 million in cuts to school construction and maintenance. These are the kinds of effects your tax cuts have had on the people of Ontario.

So far, 25 school boards in this province have had to cancel junior kindergarten classes and 23 boards have had to reduce special education programs. Seven boards — we heard about this within the last month or two — have had to cut their library resources. It's kind of interesting that whereas the rest of North America seems to be going in the opposite direction as far as education funding and excellence in education are concerned, what's happening here in Ontario? We have dropped from being the 29th to being the 46th in actual annual expenditure on a per-pupil basis in the American states and in the Canadian provinces. We are 46th out of 60 jurisdictions.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** — spending money.

**Mr Gerretsen:** No, I'm not talking about spending money. I'm talking about not giving a tax cut until these programs are properly maintained and until the people of Ontario have the kind of hospital care, the kind of medical care they deserve and have become accustomed to.



Let's look at the other end of the scale. What has happened to tuition fees, for example? Let's take a look at the tuition fees, what the students in this province now have to come up with as a result of the tax cut and the cuts to education funding. It's very interesting that whereas the average student paid \$2,200 for tuition fees about two years ago, in the year 1997-98, they can expect to pay almost \$3,400, an increase of \$1,000, or over 40%, in a matter of two to three years.

This is at the same time that we know students who graduate from university programs cannot get a job. We currently have the highest level of youth unemployment, more so than any other sector in this country, at almost 20%.

Let's take a look at some other deficits. Let's talk about the deficit to children. We got our statistics from the food bank here in Toronto. It's very interesting that in 1995 some 42,000 children — which in and of itself is a staggering number when you think about it — in this greater Toronto area were dependent upon the food banks that operate in the Toronto area. What's the figure this year? It's almost double that: 70,000 children are dependent upon food banks.

If that's something you're proud of, you're totally wrong. Implicitly, you're saying that when you don't put enough money in the social programs, in the educational programs, in the welfare programs and in the health care programs, but would rather pay that money back in a tax cut that we, as Ontarians, with the kind of society we have, can ill afford.

Let's look at another statistic: children in poverty in Ontario. Let's see what's happened there.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** You were against the breakfast program.

**Mr Gerretsen:** We were against the breakfast program? With all due respect to the minister, it's a well-known fact that the member for Windsor-Sandwich, Ms Papatello, was after the Premier for well over a year to live up to the commitment he made in the 1995 election to start the breakfast program for children. When he refused to do so, she started it and shamed you people into it. You know and I know it that that's exactly what happened.

In any event, children in poverty in Ontario are 19% of the total Ontario population. I don't think that is a statistic that any of us in this House can be proud of. Whatever can be done in services to children and to the parents who obviously live with the children, to help to get these people out of poverty, we should be encouraging, not discouraging, the way you appear to be doing.

When you look at the whole funding envelope for children in general, there are some great inconsistencies. For example, an issue that's been raised a number of times in this House is the funding for children's aid societies. We've all experienced the horrible stories over the last month or so of children being abused, of two or three children even dying in the province, in situations where perhaps — it's not a certainty, but perhaps — they could have been helped if there had been adequate funding for children's aid societies in this province.

In your budget documents and in your estimates that we're discussing here tonight, you have deducted \$17

million from the children's aid societies of this province, less than what you allocated to them last year. If you really think that cutting that kind of amount from the budgets of the children's aid societies is not having an effect on their ability to look after children in need, if you really think so, you're dead wrong, totally and absolutely wrong. That's having an effect.

When you look at children in poverty, statistics clearly show that children who live in those kinds of conditions are seven times more likely to be abused or to become dependent on alcohol or drugs.

I've already talked to you about the deficit in the employment situation for the youth in this province. In the first quarter of 1996, 16%, a totally unacceptable number, of youths in Ontario were unemployed; 16%, almost one in six youngsters, were looking for work and couldn't find a job. That was in 1996, in the first quarter. What is it today? It's closer to 19%. We're not winning that battle, we're losing that battle, and we're losing that battle because not only are you refusing to do anything about it, you're actually funding those programs less than you did before.

As I mentioned before, the cost of the tax cut itself — it only costs \$1 billion. I say "only" \$1 billion; that's a lot of money that could have been spent in these areas I've talked about. It costs the taxpayers of this province \$1 billion in the year 1996-97, but by the year 2000 it will cost the taxpayers \$6 billion.

If you had been consistent, at least you would have said: "We're not going to give a tax cut. Let's make sure that the public debt of this province isn't going to rise any more. Let's make sure that the annual deficit is eliminated and let's start paying some of that money back."

The other very interesting figure is the fact that almost 20% of all the money being taken in by the province on an annual basis is being paid out in interest payments to individuals and to corporations: \$9.1 billion, a \$2-billion increase over just two years ago.

Those are some of the deficits that we like to talk about on this side of the House: health care, education, the deficit to children, the real deficits to the people of Ontario.

The other side of the issue is this: Yes, some people are getting a tax cut, as I've already indicated, some people are getting a few more dollars in their pocket, but how are they going to spend it? I can almost guarantee you that if any of them own a house, they're going to be spending it on more property taxes.

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We all know the charade that we went through here when you very graciously took off the \$5.4 billion in education costs from the property tax bill. You hailed it as something that was very grand and everybody liked it until the people realized that, yes, you were taking \$5.4 billion off, but you were putting \$6.4 billion on to the property tax bill on the other side for an increase of \$1 billion of costs that would now have to be picked up by the property taxpayers in the province. We all remember the great hullabaloo that arose over that. Your Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Premier got together with AMO and the other municipal leaders and



all of a sudden a new agreement was reached whereby basically only half of the residential education costs would be taken off the property tax roll and in effect there would be a smaller transfer of services and the dollar amounts associated therewith to the local municipalities.

But you know, it's very interesting that when those figures were added up, \$3.2 billion was taken off the property tax roll, and what was added on was \$3.8 billion. Are the municipalities happier than they were when \$1 billion was going to be added on to the property tax roll? Of course they're happier, since now only \$600 million is going to be added on. But would they prefer to have nothing added on from the provincial side of things? Obviously, because the bottom line to the property taxpayer, the single home taxpayer who may be watching out there tonight, is that they are going to be paying more property taxes as a result of the transfers that you have dumped on to local municipalities, some \$600 million more.

I know what your game plan is and is what your hope is. You are hoping that there will be so much pressure on the local councils when they see what they are going to have to pay for next year that they're not paying this year that they in effect will do your dirty work. They will say, "We can't possibly burden our taxpayers with a 5%, 10% or 20% increase and we'd better do something about it."

They've got two choices. One choice is to pass it on to the local property taxpayer, in which case they're going to be blamed for the 5%, 10% or 20% increase. The other choice is that they're going to reduce services. Those are the only two choices out there. They're going to either reduce services or pass on those increases. I'm sure the people out there and the backbenchers as well may be interested in knowing in what areas these transfers are actually taking place.

Municipalities are going to have to pick up \$853 million more of the cost of social services than they currently are.

Another big one that's out there is social housing. I always find this a very interesting one because at one time I was chairman of the Ontario Housing Corp, some three or four years ago, and I know that most of the contracts that exist between the non-profit groups and the co-op groups are directly between those groups and the province. In most cases the municipalities have absolutely nothing to do with these units other than the fact that they may have approved them at one point in time from a planning viewpoint and from a construction viewpoint.

In effect, you are saying to these municipalities, "Whatever the subsidy dollars that we currently pay on these contracts that have been signed between the groups and the province" — you're handing those contracts over to the municipalities and you're basically saying, "They are now your costs." Quite frankly, I think that's one of the most unfair things I've ever seen. The municipalities had absolutely no say over what these contracts were all about, and now unilaterally you are going to turn those contracts over to them, which in many cases probably still have anywhere from 15 to 20 or 25 years to run. It will be very interesting to see how that one's going to work out.

I understand that for next year, in effect, what will happen is that each one of the municipalities will simply get a bill from the province. That will say, "There are so many non-profit units in your municipality," or so many social housing units or so many co-op units. "We have determined that our costs for these units are X number of dollars per year," where we have subsidy dollars. You've got X number of units times whatever the cost per unit is. "Here's your bill for \$2 million or \$3 million or \$4 million or \$5 million, and now you'd better pay us."

I guess in the year after that those contracts are going to be transferred and the municipalities are going to be looking after them in their entirety. I will tell you that you haven't heard the last of that from your local councillors in the constituencies that each one of you represents.

The other area that I always find very interesting is this whole farm tax, another rebate program. Those farm tax programs — and the Minister of Agriculture is here. He well knows that those are paid to farmers, who are basically in rural municipalities. In effect, what you're doing is transferring that \$170-million program to, in most cases, the most rural municipalities in the province, which will now have to pick up those costs. They are probably in the worst financial position to actually deal with those kinds of issues or with the money requirements that these kinds of programs require. I'm sure you'll be hearing from a lot of local councils once they realize what the bill for that is going to be next year.

The other one is public health. This is the one that makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. In public health, you're transferring \$225 million. It's interesting that most public health programs are funded by the province right now and that municipalities are either not involved directly or in a very minimal way. You are saying that from now on the local municipalities will fund the health units of this province.

As we all know, particularly in the rural areas or the small urban areas, a health unit is comprised of members from many different municipalities. Nobody has told these health units yet how that money is going to be allocated between municipalities. Indeed, nobody has told the municipalities how much they are going to be responsible for next year, and of course the public health units are in quite a disarray since they would much rather deal with one payor — namely, the province of Ontario — than with the 20, 30 or 40 different municipalities that may be making up a particular unit. I'm sure there will be much said about that as well.

The other program, of course, that you eliminated not just this year, but the final effect is going to be felt at the local level, is the municipal support program. At one time the province of Ontario used to pay up to —

**Mr Laughren:** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Yes, member for Nickel Belt.

**Mr Laughren:** Sorry to disturb you. I do think it's time that we checked for a quorum in this House. It would also give a chance to the member for Kingston and The Islands to regoup.

**The Speaker:** Is a quorum present?



**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**Mr Gerretsen:** As I was saying, now that the government members have re-entered the House, and hopefully they will listen to what I and others will have to say over the next little while, the elimination of the municipal support program in and of itself is depriving municipalities of \$667 million. These were the kind of programs that many municipalities, particularly the smaller municipalities that don't have adequate tax bases themselves, relied on in order to run their various operations.

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The other one, and I know the member for Renfrew North has very eloquently talked about this in the past, is the transfer of ambulance costs to the local municipalities. Some \$200 million is proposed to be picked up by the local municipalities for the first time ever. Most of them have never had any involvement with this before and they're now going to be required to pick up that cost.

As has already been pointed out by the member for Renfrew North in the past, what are you going to do in rural municipalities, for example, in which you have an awful lot of crown-owned land? Who's going to pick up the cost? Is it going to be charged back to the municipality that the person needing the service is from, or how exactly are those costs going to be allocated among the municipalities?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** The members over there are saying, "We don't care," or something to that effect. You didn't?

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** They'll handle it.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Oh, they'll handle it, will they? In a small municipality that has a tax base of maybe \$20,000 or \$30,000 per year — and there are those municipalities around; Mr Danford certainly knows a lot of them — two or three of these ambulance movements are going to cost an awful lot of money, the kind of costs these smaller municipalities simply have not been exposed to or involved with before.

The final one I want to talk about, one very close to my heart, is the fact that the province will no longer pay the subsidy —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Members, I appreciate the fact that there's a quorum now, but we still need some order and decorum. If you're going to have discussions, I understand that, but they've got to come down a little bit. Member for Grey-Owen Sound, I'd appreciate it if you'd come to order as well and stop scratching your head.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, because there is an issue I want to talk about and have talked about before in this House: the ferry subsidy program that the province is totally getting out of.

As you know, I've got three islands in my riding that have relied for the last 30 or 40 years upon provincial involvement in making sure these people can get off and on the islands to their various places of work etc. The costs for operating those ferries are going to be entirely placed on the local municipalities. Guess what? In most

of those cases, the municipality would have to increase their taxes seven, eight, nine, 10 times to be able to afford to operate them. There just isn't the tax base there to do that.

So far, these islanders — they are part of Ontario; there is a collective responsibility to those people — are being totally ignored by the province. The province is basically saying to them, through the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Transportation, "I'm sorry, but as of January 1, 1998, they're your responsibility."

That is extremely callous. It will be the first time the province says to residents of this province, who have lived in their own local municipalities for the last 100 to 150 years, for generations: "We can no longer afford to look after you in any way, shape or form. We are no longer willing to pay the costs for you to live where you are." That's extremely callous.

With that, I will gladly yield the rest of my time.

**The Speaker:** That's because there is no more time.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Darn. We want more, More, more.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Unanimous consent.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Is there unanimous consent?

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** No.

**The Speaker:** Order. I think they're actually changing the rules right now, as we speak. The time thing is coming under discussion.

*Further debate?*

**Mr Laughren:** I wanted to engage in this debate this evening for a number of reasons. One was that I've been inspired by a couple of the speeches others have made, some in a very positive way and others not so positively. I must say I'm looking at the member for Kitchener as I say that.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** He's a positive guy. You be quite positive.

**Mr Laughren:** I do want to be positive, and I always try not to be personal in this assembly. The speech from the member for Kitchener this afternoon was striking in a couple of ways. One was that it seemed to be just a tad self-congratulatory. I found that surprising, because usually members —

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** It is hard to be humble in here.

**Mr Laughren:** Maybe the Minister of Agriculture hits the nail on the head when he says it's hard to be humble when you're a Tory. I think he said that. I understand that problem, having watched Tories for some time.

The other thing, aside from being self-congratulatory, was that the member for Kitchener spoke for perhaps half an hour, was it?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Laughren:** I don't know either. It seemed longer than that, but I'm sure to the member for Kitchener it seemed a lot less than that.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It seemed like an eternity.

**Mr Laughren:** Yes, an eternity, but not once during that half-hour speech did he mention the term "family values" or "family issues." If I were a member of the Tory caucus and one of the leading luminaries of the rump made a speech and didn't talk about family issues or family values, I would be very unhappy. I would be



saying to the Premier, "We know you're contemplating a cabinet shuffle and some promotion of some of the luminaries from the back benches into cabinet, but if this member can speak for half an hour and not once mention family issues or family values, I don't think he deserves to be promoted to cabinet."

That may sound harsh, and I don't like to be personal, but for those two reasons: that he was a tad too self-congratulatory for my liking — oh, Jim Brown is here, the family issues member himself is here. I must say I didn't realize that, because you're not in your proper seat, sir. Nevertheless, I appreciate your presence, and I don't think it matters where you sit. When it comes to family issues, you are a cut above the rest and it doesn't matter where you sit. What I do wonder, though, is how you tolerate the fact that the member for Kitchener made a half-hour speech and never mentioned family issues once. I think you need to have a heart-to-heart with the member for Kitchener. I tolerated the self-congratulatory tenor of his speech, but the fact that he didn't mention family issues bothered me a great deal.

I want to talk about a number of issues, none of which compares in importance to family issues, but nevertheless a couple of other issues.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Talk about Dr Galt.

**Mr Laughren:** The member for Sudbury East talks about the member for Northumberland, who made a speech this evening on these concurrences. I was somewhat taken aback. I've had my problems with Mr Galt, and I'll tell you why I've had a problem with Mr Galt. He will not be happy with these comments, but I think it needs to be laid out.

I served on the resources development committee and we were dealing with the privatization of water. I went to a subcommittee meeting to determine where the committee would go to have meetings. At that meeting, the clerk of the committee came in and said, "We don't think we can justify going to Thunder Bay and to Ottawa, because only two or three people have indicated an interest in appearing before the committee, and to fly the entire committee, plus the research, plus the translation services and the clerk to these communities seems a bit much, a bit excessive." I said, "I've got no problem with that," and we invited written submissions to the committee.

Then, when somebody appeared before the committee later, I believe it was here in Toronto, and complained about the fact that the committee had not gone to Thunder Bay or Ottawa, the member for Northumberland, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment, said: "You'd better talk to the opposition. They're the ones who agreed to this."

There's a code of conduct around this place where we try to make the system work. We have our partisan moments; I understand that, and I'm as much a part of that as anybody. But it seems to me that when we're trying to make the system work in a responsible way, we honour that and we don't exploit that. I was taken aback and surprised and disappointed when that happened.

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I've got a bit of a problem with the member for Northumberland, so when he gets up and speaks about all

the evils of the previous governments and the virtues of the present government, I listen to him a little more closely and see if maybe there are some errors in his arguments or gaps in his logic. For someone who has spent I think most of his life in the public sector as a veterinarian with the Ministry of Agriculture, I believe, to be extolling the virtues of the marketplace as he has I find just a bit thick. I don't want to get into personal things, but that bothers me, because you cannot have it both ways in this chamber. As they say, if you're going to talk the talk, you'd better walk the walk. I think that's where the member for Northumberland needs to assess his position on these matters.

Moving away from that, I wanted to talk about a couple of ministries on the list for concurrences here, in keeping with the rules of the assembly. One of them has to do with the Ministry of Natural Resources. In this chamber we've raised from time to time the issue of firefighting in northern Ontario. I asked a question, as a matter of fact, earlier this week about the closure of a fire base in a small community in my own constituency called Gogama. The minister responded, as he should have, and indicated that he would send some people into the community to explain to the local residents why he'd done what he did. I appreciated that. I had no real problems with the Minister of Natural Resources' answer.

But he did at one point make some comment about which bases had been closed, so I went back and dug out some material about which fire bases had been closed and which ones had been kept open. This comes from the Ministry of Natural Resources. When I go through the list, the following fire bases have been closed, and it's all indicated on this sheet from the Ministry of Natural Resources: Hornepayne, and the MPP for that area is Wildman; Ignace, and the MPP is Hampton; Isaac Lake, and the MPP is Bill Murdoch; Kapuskasing, and the MPP is Len Wood; Kirkland Lake, and the MPP is Dave Ramsay; Manitouwadge, and the MPP is Pouliot; Nipigon, and the MPP is Pouliot; Nym Lake, and the MPP is Hampton; Plevna, and the MPP is Vankoughnet; Temagami, and the MPP is Ramsay; Tweed, and the MPP is Danford; Whitney, and the MPP is Conway. Those were all closed.

There are two on this list that were kept open. They were the following: Grundy Lake, MPP Ernie Eves; and Haliburton, MPP Chris Hodgson.

That's the entire list I have in front of me. If there are any errors in it, then I'd ask the Ministry of Natural Resources to forward that information to me.

All I'm asking is, is it a coincidence that all the closures were in the ridings of opposition members and some backbench Tory members — not many, but some — and that the only two kept open were in the ridings of the minister himself and the Minister of Finance? Is that a coincidence, I ask you? And you wonder why there's cynicism out there in the province about the way politicians in power behave. I'm not saying that when my government was in office we reduced the level of cynicism any more than you have. All I'm saying is that on this particular issue, I'd like to hear from you why you think I'm somewhat sceptical about the logic behind the fire base closures.



In Gogama, for example, not just because it's in my constituency but because I know it best and the people have come to me, we have a small community of about 400 people. It's in the centre of a major wood basket, as we call it up there. Timmins is about 65 or 75 miles to the north, Sudbury is a little farther than that to the south, and there are no other large communities and no other fire bases. This year and part of last year as well, that community sits there while their permanent firefighters are stationed in Timmins. They live in Gogama, because that's their home, and Timmins, which is about 75 miles away, is where their particular base is located.

But guess what happens? Every morning the people from Gogama, the firefighters who live there, get in their own personal vehicles, drive to Timmins, pick up the firefighting vehicles and equipment, bring them back to Gogama to be on standby, and then at night drive the equipment back to Timmins, get in their own personal automobiles, drive back to Gogama, and the next morning the whole process starts all over again: They drive to Timmins, pick up the equipment and drive back to Gogama. It is nonsense, absolute nonsense.

Both last year and this year, the Ministry of Natural Resources seems to understand that this is a problem, that Gogama is a critical area.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** Have you written a letter to the minister?

**Mr Laughren:** We've written letters, we've raised it in the Legislature, the local people have made presentations. As a matter of fact, I think the minister is starting to understand that there's a problem there, although he didn't quite indicate that to me, but he did indicate he was prepared to send somebody into that community to talk to them about the strategy. I suggested he go there because — and it's got nothing to do with it being fire season — he would get a very warm reception if he went to the community of Gogama and explained what it is that he's doing.

**Mr Murdoch:** Would you go with him?

**Mr Laughren:** I'll be there, believe me. I'd love to be there to hear these explanations. As a matter of fact, the member for Grey-Owen Sound would be very welcome to attend.

**Mr Conway:** It's just too bad that he isn't still the minister's parliamentary assistant.

**Mr Laughren:** If he were the parliamentary assistant, I don't think we'd have this problem. The member for Grey-Owen Sound was really good at putting out fires, so to speak. When there was a problem in the ministry, the member for Grey-Owen Sound was there. It seems to me that if he were still the parliamentary assistant —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Laughren:** There are those of you who say, "If Mr Murdoch was so good as a parliamentary assistant, why isn't he still there?"

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Nobody said that.

**Mr Laughren:** I think that's a pertinent question. I think the answer is best repeated from the mouth of the parliamentary assistant himself. This comes from Bill Murdoch, MPP, Grey-Owen Sound, his own words. I could not make this up. I don't have the soul of a poet the way Mr Murdoch does. He said, "You have to be

nicey-nicey and kiss ass if you want to get ahead." I couldn't make that up, but that's what the member for Grey-Owen Sound said. I wish he were still there.

**The Speaker:** Order. I would just caution the member for Nickel Belt that language is always a careful thing in here, and "nicey-nicey" could be out of order.

**Mr Laughren:** It's so gratifying to know that the Speaker is listening. I appreciate that, Mr Speaker.

All I am saying is that you haven't got it right yet. On firefighting, it was one thing to close the towers, where people sat in there all summer —

**Ms Martel:** Stop there.

**Mr Laughren:** Anyway, there were problems with young men sitting in those towers all summer with nobody to talk to.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** You get that lonely feeling.

**Mr Laughren:** Yes, it was a very lonely existence.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Some of them put out fires where there was no fire.

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**Mr Laughren:** I really must move on because Mr Brown is here and I wouldn't want to be taken to task for making light of family issues or family values.

I would like to conclude that part of my remarks though by saying that it is a serious problem in a community like Gogama. They're very vulnerable. I can't remember the numbers now, but at one point there were something like five firefighting groups from Ontario and dozens of them from out of province.

I know what the minister's view is: You allow the province to operate with a minimum number of firefighters and then draw on other jurisdictions as the need arises. That sounds pretty good on the surface, but the problem is going to arise when you end up with a problem in two or three jurisdictions at the same time, which is not unheard of in the firefighting season.

I would simply say that it remains a problem. I hope the Minister of Natural Resources will take this seriously. If, for example, the people from Gogama were out fighting a fire somewhere else and a fire broke out in that area, there would be a problem in that community. I was in the northern part of my own constituency in that area last week and had to have a police escort to drive through a forest fire because they'd evacuated all the cottages and they had to make sure nobody went into those cottages and caused any problems. So it still is a problem up there and it's going to continue to be a problem. It's one thing to try and be efficient, but sometimes you go too far.

I remember a corporate executive at Falconbridge one time after they'd announced these huge layoffs. I said to him, "How do you know when you've gone too far with the layoffs?" He said to me: "Oh, you go too far. You deliberately go too far and then you build it back to where it should be. Otherwise you'll never know if you've gone far enough." I can't help but think that's the way the Minister of Natural Resources is viewing this. He's cutting back dramatically on firefighting crews and figuring that, "Well, you know, as problems arise, we'll fix it then." That's hard to do when you've got forest fires and the speed at which they move. I would simply say that I think the Ministry of Natural Resources needs to take a serious look at this.



I wanted to spend a moment on education, because one of the most publicized declarations of the Harris government has been that any cuts in education would not affect the classroom and that it would simply cut down on bureaucracy. Part of the symbolism of that, it seems to me, was the reduction of school boards and so forth, even though most of us know that's not where the real bucks are. The real bucks are in teachers and the classrooms themselves. That's where the real dollars are.

**Mr Conway:** That's about as far as you can go with Silipo sitting beside you.

**Mr Laughren:** I'd better not go any further, that's right, with the former Minister of Education beside me. There are two former ministers of education in the House this evening.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** That's not what Sweeney said.

**Mr Conway:** The Chairman of the Toronto Board, I did not claim —

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I'll defend that too.

**Mr Laughren:** That's true, yes.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Mr Sweeney didn't agree.

**Mr Silipo:** He does and he's wrong.

**Mr Laughren:** As a matter of fact, I might even disagree with my colleague here. I don't have a problem with the reduction in the number of school boards. I'm quite open about that and I've always said that. I don't have a problem with that. What I do have a problem with is the pretence of the Minister of Education that he can take, what is it, \$1 billion out — it's already about half of that, and there's another big chunk to come out — and that will not affect the classroom. I think that's wishful fissing — wishful thinking.

**Mr Conway:** What was that?

**Mr Laughren:** I don't know what that was.

You cannot do that. You can't do it to that extent. You could reduce all the school boards, you could eliminate the school boards, and you won't save that kind of money. That's not where the dollars are spent.

I do believe we're headed for some tough times in education and that we need to be very mindful of that. It's become almost trite to say that the future of this province lies in our young people and that we must educate them because, believe me, out there around the world it's incredibly competitive, and that comes through the educational system.

I wanted to speak for a moment about northern Ontario, where the school boards have been joined together and some small boards are feeling really, really hard done by, and I think rightly so. There were boards that were known as isolate boards and they've been now lumped together with other boards. In an area which I represent or the member for Algoma represents, there are places like Chapleau, Hornepayne, White River, Michipicoten, Blind River, the Sault and Manitouwadge which are all being lumped together into one school board. The problem is that there are some of those communities that are small — I'll give you an example in my own constituency.

If this unfolds the way the minister seems to want it to, Chapleau will have zero trustees when the new board is formed. They will not have any trustees at all. This was a community that had its own school board. To say now,

"You're part of a larger board," is one thing, but to say, "You're part of a larger board with no representation on it whatsoever," that's another matter entirely.

I think the minister has to think about that. He either has to change the boundaries or lump some of the isolate boards together, separate from the Sault board in this case, or he has to say that we're going to allow these small boards to have representation on the new larger board. I think that's only fair, because you're really taking representation away from people completely who have had their own board, and I think that's fundamentally wrong.

The minister knows this, by the way. He's very much aware that that's a problem in the north. We'll see, because I get this uneasy feeling that — that was a song by the Eagles. Anyway, I get this very uneasy feeling that the minister wants to do one thing and the bureaucracy wants to do another thing.

**Mr Conway:** What else is new?

**Mr Laughren:** "What else is new?" says the former Minister of Education. That's absolutely true. I think the Ministry of Education is not plugged into the small-p politics of the local community. They're not plugged into that at all. They've got a model and they want the ministry to adhere to that model. The minister understands better from listening to MPPs and others that there's a problem here, and I think he would like to fix it. It's going to be fascinating in the next week — because I think it has to happen in the next week or so or it won't happen — whether or not the minister is able to carry the day. I hope very much he does, and if he does I will applaud him for it because I think that's the right move to make.

As I said, I'm not coming at this from a position of no change. I happen to agree with the need to reduce the number of school boards. That's not my problem. My problem is to make sure that when it's done, it's done in a proper way, in such a way that the people in that local community don't feel it's completely disfranchised, which is what's happening to them under the present system, and that's wrong. I really believe that's wrong.

It's not dollars. I mean, what's it going to cost to give Chapleau one trustee on this larger board or to allow the smaller isolate boards to go together as one board? It's not a case of money at all. It's a case of whether or not the ministry has got its cookie cutter out and says: "That's it. We're not going to alter the borders on that cookie cutter." I think that's wrong.

I know I'm quickly running out of time. I did want to speak briefly on health care, because the government has made much to-do about spending more money in health care, not less. If this is true, you people have a communications problem. If not a problem, you've got a communications challenge. Perhaps I could put it more positively. You have to decide —

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Because you guys all spent it.

**The Speaker:** This is not a dialogue.

**Mr Laughren:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. For the member for Kitchener to be concerned about health care when he didn't mention family issues or family values in his speech I find passing strange.



I would simply say that the government has got a challenge in communicating its plans on health care, because not only is the population increasing but the population is aging. To simply say, "We're putting as much money in," or even more money in, doesn't deal with the problem; it doesn't deal with the problem at all. Not only that, you've got high technology in health care that's increasing the costs. You've got the increased population, the aging population and the increased costs of drugs and technology. If you put \$400 million in, that doesn't mean you've got the equivalent level of health care that you had before, because of those problems.

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I know it's a problem, because I can remember being in government and fretting over the increases in health care costs. As a matter of fact, we as a government ratcheted down the increase in health care costs from something like 11% a year to about 1% a year in increases. That was very, very tough, but we did that. The Ontario drug benefit program was increasing at 19% a year, and that's unacceptable. The system cannot sustain that. I'm saying that in terms of health care and in terms of the drug benefit program.

**Mr Murdoch:** You're starting to sound like a Conservative.

**Mr Laughren:** Well, we did ratchet down those programs, so I understand the problem. All I'm saying to the government members is that you've got a real challenge here. If you think you can kid the people in this province that you're putting more money into health care while the level of service is deteriorating, you've got a real task ahead of you, I want to tell you, because it's raised in the Legislature virtually every day, about waiting lists and about people dying and so forth. That's very, very tough.

Part of the problem is that you're closing hospitals and restructuring the hospital system, with which I agree in many ways, but you're not getting the community-based system in place while you do that or before you do that. That you're not doing, because you're trying to save money in the system, not simply restructure it. If you were trying to restructure it, you'd be doing the two in tandem. You'd be restructuring the hospital system while you built up the community-based long-term-care system. But that's not what you're doing. You're simply restructuring the hospital system and hanging the other part of the equation out to dry. That's why you're going to get into trouble and that's why the problems are raised in this Legislature day after day after day, because you're trying to have it both ways.

My own community is a good example, where you're closing two out of the three hospitals. My other two colleagues, the members for Sudbury East and Sudbury, I don't think are as enthusiastic as I about the need for hospital restructuring. But I happen to agree —

**Mr Conway:** Seniority has its advantages.

**Mr Laughren:** No, I'm not saying that. I think they have a right to their views and I'm not saying that I'm right or they're wrong. I personally think that's not a bad thing to do, but you've got to put in place the other half of the equation, community-based long-term care.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** And it's happening.

**Mr Laughren:** It's not happening. I live there. I can see what's happening and what's not happening, and it's simply not happening. I simply say that there's a challenge there for the government, and we'll see what happens, because the public will not tolerate a deterioration in our health care system. They will not tolerate it. You will pay a political price if you do that. That may not bother you, but I'm telling you that you will pay a price for that.

Mr Speaker, I know my time is about up, but I've enjoyed this exchange with members of the government party this evening and your attention to the remarks that have been made on all sides. I simply say that my only disappointment in this whole debate today has been the member for Kitchener. The fact, as I've said before, that he could speak for half an hour and not mention family values or family issues is a matter of great disappointment to me. I'm not important in this equation, but I can only imagine what his constituents are thinking.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** It's a pleasure this evening to rise and participate in the debate on concurrence. The fundamental starting point for me has always been, where do we start? You have to look at where you came from. In fact, I think the most quoted line was the \$1 million an hour that we were spending in servicing the debt, which the previous speaker from Nickel Belt maybe considered to be one of the causes of the dilemma of this very debate. A \$100-billion debt, I guess you could fundamentally boil it down to being a family values issue, because we're leaving nothing for the future, we're leaving nothing for our children, our young people. The hope and opportunity had virtually disappeared.

Our government set about — and we were elected, I might add, on a very fundamental foundation of fiscal prudence and wisdom, for which our finance minister, Ernie Eves, is certainly respected throughout the province, if not indeed the country. Most recently, his previous budget was a budget aimed at reducing spending and also reducing the amount of tax. That's exactly the premise of this government: to reduce spending on one side and to reduce taxation on the other side. They go hand in hand. We have to give the people of Ontario back the money that is rightfully theirs.

On May 6 it was just more good news. On May 6 our Minister of Finance introduced a budget which brought back hope and opportunity and prosperity to Ontario, to each and every citizen. I might say that under the leadership of Mike Harris our plan allows Ontarians to keep more of their hard-earned money while making priority investments in areas like health care, education and safe communities.

I'm going to try to go through and represent —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Durham East, I just want to ask the members to come to order. I think it's important we give everyone the opportunity to speak and be heard.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Kitchener, you're not being helpful.

**Mr O'Toole:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate your interjections that allow me the opportunity to speak to the people who may be watching today and certainly



the members in the House here this evening. This extended time for debate is very important for we backbenchers to have the chance to talk about the issues we're hearing about from the people in our ridings.

My riding of Durham East is a heavily industrial area; it's also an agricultural area. But if I look at the starting point, and I said we were spending \$1 million each and every hour, and after a couple of budgets I'm reading that we're creating 1,000 jobs a day, who could argue? I think the plan is working. I think the fundamentals are very sound, in economic principles.

I'm going to read some very good news things here. I think the opposition should listen. These are by renowned economists and bankers in Ontario and indeed Canada. They project the GDP growth, the gross domestic product growth, to 3.3% in 1997 and 3.6% in 1998. So indeed we have positive lines of growth in our economy. The underlying factor in growth in the economy is jobs. When you grow the economy, grow the output, obviously it creates employment, and employment is the fundamental behind all of this. Everyone has the right to a job. We're trying to create the climate for jobs. Government doesn't create jobs.

The real GDP growth is forecast at 3.3%, higher than the 3.2% projected. So all of our forecast predictions have been very modest, very fiscally sound and understated, if anything. In fact, when you read the final numbers this year, the deficit indeed was lower than the original forecast amount.

All of this, when you look at it in the context of how does Ontario, with its 11 million hardworking people, affect Canada, you've got to recognize that with 11 million people it represents about one third of the total population of this great country. With that kind of population, when you look at the jobs growth in Ontario and indeed Canada, the finance minister from the federal government has projected growth of some 700,000 new jobs. Of that, Ontarians have been getting more than their fair share; they've been getting two thirds of those net new jobs.

Our original commitment of 725,000 new jobs has to have the sound fundamentals of the economics in place to create the climate for growth for jobs and opportunity for our young people and in fact our existing workforce. 2030

I'm going to try to go through it and just point out to members that the press, not all of which is always friendly, is always reporting what they see and what they observe without regard to the political party. Reading from the Toronto Star of yesterday, it says at the top, "Biz Rides Crest of Wave" — the crest of the wave. That means that Ontario's economy is producing \$354.8 billion worth of goods and services by the end of 1998 —

**Mr Pouliot:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I notice that the government has failed again in its responsibility to ensure a quorum. Would you please conduct a quorum count?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would you please check to see if there's a quorum present?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker. *The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Durham East.

**Mr O'Toole:** I know that many of the members have returned just to hear some of the enlightened comments my colleagues are liable to interject from time to time.

I'm trying to bring into focus the importance of the economics of our budget process and the fundamentals for creating jobs and hope and opportunity in Ontario. It's that confident climate that each one of us on both sides of the House is responsible for communicating to our population that indeed it is a great place to live, to work, to invest and to play.

Looking at it, I can say our plan is working. Why can I say it's working? I repeat, we're creating 1,000 jobs a day. Just think of it. I personally have five children, and a couple of them are looking for summer jobs. The jobs are there. I keep telling them that getting a job today is a job in itself. The government's job is not to create the job; it is to create the climate for investment, and the investment will create a job that is sustainable without government spending.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business had a statement on May 6 from Judith Andrew: "The proof is in the pudding. It's already starting to work. You are seeing more money rolling into the provincial coffers than ever. To have the growth in the economy, you have to have policies that are working." It's clear that small independent businesses, represented by the federation, are confident that our policies are the right policies to create jobs, hope and opportunity.

There were a couple of relevant comments made, and I'm going to refer to this important little booklet. Any person in Ontario can contact your MPP and you will be able to get a copy of this important, small, very readable document that outlines the fundamentals of our present budget, and indeed it targets where we intend to be by 1999-2000: with a balanced budget. That's a promise made; it will be a promise kept. You can count on our leader. We're doing exactly what we promised. There's no surprise.

The plan is working. We're willing to adjust the plan by listening and responding to the economy and applying the right factors to make the economy work for the people of Ontario, not to put up barriers to growth and opportunity but to create that growth and opportunity by eliminating the red tape and the barriers to growth.

One of the main factors I want to focus on, that the member for Nickel Belt mentioned, is health care. Our minister, Jim Wilson, is widely respected for having a very solid grasp of the fundamentals in the restructuring that is necessary in health care. The member for Beaches-Woodbine, a previous Minister of Health, said very clearly that restructuring in health care is necessary. That's what we are doing. We have the Health Services Restructuring Commission, led by Duncan Sinclair, at arm's length to the province. There were some 9,000 empty beds in Ontario. The two previous governments, both the Liberal and the NDP, were responsible for the policies that closed beds, in fact closed complete floors in some hospitals. What we are doing is consolidating, with the assistance of a very professional board under Duncan Sinclair. Dr Sinclair has come forward to provide



some guidelines and some recommendations to our minister for the restructuring of health care.

But in my riding, just a couple of weeks ago, we announced the opening of the MRI at the Oshawa General Hospital. A week or so later, we announced some \$8.1 million for long-term care. Just recently put in place in Durham region, effective June 1, was the community care access centre. That volunteer board has worked very hard to make the transition from the duplication and overbureaucratic process of delivering long-term care to getting people the care they need in their homes.

If you look at health care as one issue, it's the biggest ministry. We were spending, when we came into government, \$17.4 billion. What has the government committed to spend on health care? I'm going to ask the member for Nickel Belt if he is paying attention. What are we committed to in this budget? Is it more than \$17.4 billion? Is it, in your view, a wise thing to examine the priorities and to restructure the delivery of health care? That being said, we're spending \$18.5 billion on health care, so we're not spending less on health care.

For people listening, I know there is a great deal of unease and uncertainty. We have dealt with the doctor group and we have an agreement with the OMA. It's the first time in many years that we have had a working agreement with the Ontario Medical Association. Our doctors are the keystone to the delivery of health care. We have to have stability and a climate for negotiation and debate. We've done that. Our minister has put in place a working understanding with the doctors, but indeed they're going to look at the fee-for-service schedule, certainly they are.

With technology changes in health care, for example, someone who was getting a cataract operation some years ago may have been in the hospital for a week; now it's a laser treatment and it's a much different process. Internal medicine used to be open-cavity surgery; now we have in place laparoscopic surgery. With new technology, much of the internal medicine is handled on an outpatient basis. That frees up hospital beds, but what do they need? The patient needs a solid, well-developed, well-defined home care plan.

The community care access centre for Durham region — in fact, there are 43 community care access centres across the province — is a one-stop shop for the patient, the family and the support group for that family to call and get, with the advice of the doctors and the other care providers, the care they need in their home. The medical evidence is very clear that patients recover much quicker with the diet and accommodations in their own homes, provided the supports are there.

I think I had agreement from the member for Nickel Belt that health care has to be restructured. We're putting the money in place. We're putting the services in place closer to home, the right service in the right place for the patient. That's the most important thing: patient-focused health care.

I'll just wrap up on health care. I've been to many meetings with the Ontario Nursing Association. I have attended some of their town hall meetings and I have met with them in my constituency office, as I know many members have. The integrated health care plan is a very

important part of this. All the partners, the nurses, the doctors and the other health care providers must work together to make the most efficient use of hardworking taxpayers' dollars. Don't forget this is the largest ministry. We're committing more money. If you look at the restructuring, we're committing both capital dollars, that is, for restructuring in Sudbury, Windsor and other parts of the province; we're putting in place the capital dollars for the modernized facilities, the technology. And we've got agreement with the doctors. It's my understanding, my belief and my commitment that health care will be there for the people. It just needs the doctors and all the health care workers to work together. They're scarce dollars and they must be spent prudently.

#### 2040

When I think about the budget, one of the main factors is that about 90% of all the employers in Ontario are small businesses, that is, with under 20 employees. They need a less bureaucratic, more of a one-window approach, and our Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Mr Tsubouchi, has done a fine job to put in place the business registration aspect. We have one in Durham, where the small business operator can go in and register the business for tax and other kinds of requirements, for licensing, one place to shop, closer to home. We're doing it in Durham. I'm sure we're doing it across the rest of the province, a very important part.

But there was another important initiative in the budget I'd like to refer to, that I'm rather proud of. A small group, Joe Spina, myself, Rob Sampson, Jim Brown and a number of members, worked with the Minister of Finance and the deputy minister, Michael Gourley, to put in place access to capital. If you get calls in your constituency office like I do, small business people, entrepreneurs, people who may have lost their jobs through restructuring in the economy, need working capital. What was happening was that many of the banks took as much time to develop and analyse a business plan for a \$1-million loan as they did for a \$50,000 loan.

The access to capital plan does a couple of things. First of all, it sets up the community pool of access to funds. The working ventures funds, the labour-sponsored investment funds, were a rather restrictive group of funds, perhaps weren't investing in small business as aggressively as they should have. They've been encouraged to expand that sector of pools of access to capital.

Also, the banks are taxed on the profits made from loans. Now they're able to earn back some of the tax on that profit from their loan department by lending to small business. Those are businesses with loans under \$500,000, indeed under \$50,000. It's important that the banks are there, are open for business and are taking care of the needs of small business.

As I said, 93% of all employers are small business. Every economist, whether it's David Foot in Boom, Bust and Echo, are all saying that home-based businesses, the small, customer-focused, niche market kinds of business, are the growth industry of the future. This government, our minister and our Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism are putting in place a new infrastructure, an infrastructure that recognizes the importance of small business.



There are other aspects in our access to small business. The employer health tax was mentioned during the election. That aggressive tax on a job — put in place, I might add, by the Liberal government when they were in power — has been replaced. Any payroll under \$400,000 eventually will not pay — it's being phased in — any employer health tax. That's a tax on jobs. I could immediately turn this conversation into some dialogue that I'm sure is occurring at a higher level between our Minister of Finance and Paul Martin at the federal level. When you look at the tax on jobs, at things like premiums on workers' compensation, that's really a tax on jobs. We must be fair, we must be competitive with the other provinces of this great country.

Also, the Canada pension plan has had a 70% increase in premiums. That's a tax on jobs. Why would an employer create a job when, first of all, he assumes part of the \$11-billion deficit of the WCB? That's \$4,000 per employee. You sign an employee in and you assume a liability of \$4,000. That's just one thing. Then you have the employer health tax, then you have the commitment to CPP, then you have the UI fund, or the EI fund, I guess it's called now. The EI fund is creating a huge surplus. That huge surplus at the federal government level is coming into general revenue, and that general revenue is coming from employers who pay into the fund. That fund is creating a surplus that goes into general revenue and is helping the federal government pay down part of the deficit. Who's really paying it? The employer and the employee, working people. It's just another tax.

Our minister has made it very clear that we want to reduce the EI premiums, we want to offset the increased premiums in the CPP fund long before we ever talk about the whole harmonization issue. The GST-PST harmonization, in my view, is not on. Why? Because it really is a net tax grab, and this province isn't about taxes. Our minister is for less taxes.

I think most members have heard the argument about the tax break for the rich. Indeed there is going to be a tax break, but about 90% of the tax break actually is applied to about 90% of the middle-income working group. Everyone can cite the exceptions at the end of the spectrum, the people making huge sums. Perhaps they don't make it forever, but they make \$500,000 or more per year. Of course they'll get a larger tax break because they pay more tax, but if you are in the working income group, you will get in excess of a 30% tax break when fully implemented.

That money — some call it the trickle-down effect, trickle-down economics. That's not true. The theory, well developed in other jurisdictions, is that your revenue, that is, the amount of income the government receives, actually increases by reducing tax. Just imagine it. I want you to dwell on that for a moment. In many jurisdictions throughout the free world, we've taxed people so hard that we've driven about 20% of the economy underground.

By reducing tax and making legitimate businesses address the fairness in taxation, by paying less tax you're putting in more revenue. It'll create jobs, and with more jobs there are more people earning income, and more income is more revenue for the province. Indeed, the net

outfall of all this is that there's more income for the federal government as well.

We're reducing the personal income tax at the provincial level by 30%. That's a commitment. We're doing it, and that'll put money in your pocket to spend, disposable income that you don't have today. The government has it. Ask yourself the question, how wisely have they been spending it? Look at the last 10 years of spending. In the last 10 years spending has increased dramatically. The debt has doubled. We've got questionable levels of service, very little accountability, and at the end of the day we've increased spending to in excess of a \$12-billion deficit every single year. We're reducing government spending, reducing taxation, increasing revenue. Our plan is on target. We're going to have a balanced budget by the year 2000-01. You can count on it.

It's not just a vain promise. I don't have the time to fully develop the concise arguments necessary in the fundamentals: working with small business, working to reduce the regulations and red tape, and putting in place a government that has a view of optimism and working with small business, working with all business to have fairness and equity. Hard work should be rewarded. There's nothing wrong with the word "profit." All Canadians should be able to keep the money they work for and earn.

I believe we're a very generous society as well. I can assure you, in my riding of Durham East, when it comes to things like the United Way or fund-raising for community projects — just recently I was at the Memorial Library in Port Perry in Scugog township. Local people, a small Rotary Club and a small trust fund, raised \$19,000 to commission an Internet site, which was a wonderful success. The students there who wouldn't have a computer and an Internet location at home are now able to have that whole access to the World Wide Web and the globalized world we're living in.

Mike Harris and our government didn't invent the globalized world. All we did was recognize it. We have to recognize who we're in competition with. We're doing that in education. Our Minister of Education, Mr Snobelen, has announced a new funding model which is being consulted and developed now by all the people in Ontario. If you need a booklet, call my office and you'll get one of the booklets.

#### 2050

I'm looking at the funding for each student in the classroom. We're putting the funding with the student and having a classroom focus for spending. The teacher and the student are the essential ingredients of a sound educational system. We've grown to a point where there are suggestions that there are too many boards, too many big board offices, too many conventions and too much money being spent outside the classroom. Not for a moment do I blame the teachers — not for a moment.

I believe our new curriculum, which the minister has developed in consultation with educators, is a solid example of setting high standards, providing the supports, providing the resources so our children will be competitive in a globalized world. I think it's commendable. I've heard from parents. Indeed, I heard from teachers just this evening. I called one of the teachers who is very satisfied that the curriculum is indeed a challenge.



Our teachers are professional people and all this criticism — of course, any change is going to cause some aggravation and anxiety, and I expect the opposition members to be in opposition to everything we say. That's their role. I'm not sure I'd want that role, but we listen.

I believe our educational system is responsive to the needs of the students first, the needs of the teachers second and the needs of the parents together. The councils in our schools need to be supported. The province addressed education funding, in my view, by saying: "We want equity. We want all children in Ontario, whether in Timmins or Toronto, or Gananogue or Durham, to have the same access to a solid, high-quality education, so we're going to provide those resources."

I can tell you, in my runup to the whole discussion on education, it was clear that some areas were spending in excess of \$8,000 per student and in my area one of our boards was spending less than \$6,000 per student. Those same children are going to be at the employer's window, looking for a job. They need to have equity in education. This government said — and it was mentioned by the Fair Tax Commission, it was mentioned by the Royal Commission on Learning — that the province should fund education. We've done it. We've delivered on our promises. That's a very important commitment and I believe it will work. Of course we have to work together. We have to work as partners with the educators, the parents and the students to make the system work.

I believe as opposition goes it's a tough role. I respect Mr Laughren and the tough times you've had, but we're trying to create a climate for growth and opportunity.

I don't want to turn any negative blow on this, but I have a book here which I read as a reference point for what you shouldn't do.

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** Is that the pink book?

**Mr O'Toole:** Watch your television. You may have to adjust your colour.

This isn't humorous. I'm quoting directly from the document which was a platform. The very first thing that pops out at me, and I'm just reading it at random, is, "We will provide a tax cut of 5%." They didn't put it down in real money. They also said they would balance the budget in four years.

Now wait a minute here: 5% of \$55 billion, you've got to figure that one out. Then you've got to add on that they're going to reduce the deficit. That's another \$12 billion. So they're talking \$20 billion. That amounts to reducing the amount of government spending. Where were they going to reduce the spending? Ask yourselves. The two main ministries are education and health care. Then they say in the same breath that they aren't going to cut health care and they aren't going to cut education. Of course, when you have a book like this, I'm not sure anybody knew what they were going to do, including them.

Our plan is working. If I were to pick up some of the many newspaper articles here — I'd encourage you to read the paper carefully every day. The economic news is there. I was just reading about the member for Nepean and 5,000 new jobs at Northern Telecom. That's just one example of a high-tech industry that sees the right climate

for investment and growth. In my view — I confront anyone in this House tonight — this plan is working. The promises made will be the promises kept. You can count on it that by the year 2000 you will have more spending money in your pocket, there won't be a \$12-billion deficit and the kids in our family values coalition, as Mr Laughren said, will have a brighter future.

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** It's always such a pleasure to get up and speak after the fiction is finished and we can get back to some real-life Ontario.

Naturally I wish to speak to the budget and the post-budget effects on Ontario, not just this year's but last year's too. With some fanfare the minister announced all of these wonderful goodies in the package for Ontarians, and just as reported in the press, he managed to give just a little bit of something to everybody, but upon close inspection what we realized was that it was a lot of the same old machinations that we had over the budget last year. As a matter of fact, when we went to check our books and the government's books, the government didn't spend the money they said they'd spend last year.

The area of children's services is probably the best example and one that I might like to focus on today, because I think if a government has any responsibility to anyone in a regular and consistent manner in this province, it's to the children of Ontario.

I have to say too that I'm always amused actually at the members who come in at this late hour to speak and the things they say and feel we just simply won't know about. Here's a gentleman from Durham who gets up and talks about all the benefits of the economy and the boom where he comes from. I find it interesting that he doesn't mention the kinds of calls that I know his constituency office receives in relation to children and in particular children with disabilities.

I spent some time myself in the Durham region. In fact, I attended a town hall with the Durham Family Network. How very interesting at that meeting to see no local MPP representing the Durham area who had the nerve to show up and explain to parents why in your Common Sense Revolution you promised that you would not cut aid to the disabled. Here we have the most vulnerable children in Ontario, those children with disabilities, and you don't have the nerve to show up at a town hall in your own backyard and explain to these parents why two years ago they were getting a certain number of hours of special services at home and this year, after your magical promises in your revolution, you are making these families suffer even more because what they have is fewer services at home.

Many of these children who are disabled have parents who are elderly and becoming more elderly as years go by, and their needs increase. When they look to their community and they look to their governments for some support, in particular for families like these that are the most vulnerable, they find that they can't turn to this government, even though in this Common Sense Revolution, wending its way through Ontario, that's what you promised.

I'd like to talk about the promises Mike Harris made to Ontario and to my Windsor community as he left his



airplane motor still running on the tarmac while he skirted over just to the curb of the airport during that campaign. The people in Essex county remember that the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party didn't have the nerve to come through our ridings during that election. He left the airplane running, for heaven's sake, and probably dodged the propeller to get over to the curb so he could stand on the curb and say the most ridiculous things.

On behalf of the people of Essex county, to the Premier of Ontario, I invite you to come back to Essex county today. Let me tell you, that red carpet will be rolled out for you for sure and I personally will welcome you to my riding. I'd like to take you down the streets of the Windsor Western Hospital neighbourhood. The bulk of the people who live around the residential area of the Windsor Western Hospital also happen to work at the hospital. The hospital system in Windsor and Essex county has suffered significant blows in terms of layoffs, in particular nursing staff.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Members, could you please come to order?

**Mr Murdoch:** Well —

**The Speaker:** Member for Grey-Owen Sound, there's no "well." Could you just please come to order? Thank you. Member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Thank you. I understand they'd be a little bit embarrassed by the behaviour of their Premier during the last election. He said some of the most ridiculous things, quite frankly, and I think it will come home to roost, and in fact has already started. You can't go out there with these populist themes and just say all of these things that you never have any intention of committing to when you become government. It's so easy to sit in the opposition like you did for 10 years and say all the most ridiculous things, then prepare your election platform document and go and make commitments to everybody and anybody. The very people you are hurting most likely voted for you because you weren't being completely up front with them in terms of what exactly you were going to do with them.

2100

A perfect example is the area of welfare. Here are some very vulnerable individuals in our community, people who are desperately looking for work. Historically, in the Windsor area, we found with people who receive welfare benefits that as the economy booms, the welfare rates drop. If any of the MPPs in this House would go to their own delivery agents of the welfare system, they would find that same fabulous phenomenon. When there are jobs available, the welfare rates drop. It's that simple. But no, this government has to give people the extra little boot right off the system so that, in effect, at the end you cost the same taxpayers more money.

There are four significant criteria that people meet when they go on to the welfare system. The public probably doesn't realize it is as stringent as it is and as difficult as it is. You need to be looking for work, so everyone who goes to apply needs to be looking for work. You need to be employed perhaps on a part-time

basis, but not receiving enough funding that can sustain you and/or your family. You have to be enrolled in some kind of education or training program. The fourth, which is the only one you added in this magical Ontario Works program announced with all this fanfare but no real information, is that you are now making them go into community service.

You go out there and you don't tell people what you're really doing. You actually make the most vulnerable people believe you're giving them some hope for a job, and the reality in communities these days is that life is not that simple. You can't just send them out there to volunteer at some local charity and think that will magically lead to a job.

The economy and a boom will lead to jobs. The very things that people need in education and training are the keys to giving people a real hand up. That was your rhetoric that you guaranteed the people of Ontario and you have not delivered on it. What you did was to cut adult education programs right across the board. The very things to get these people into meaningful jobs are education and training, and you cut those programs. It makes absolutely no sense to have done that and yet that's what you've done.

I feel very badly for the people. I have a volunteer, a retiree, a former businesswoman, who comes into my office and does volunteer work out of my constituency doing counselling for jobs. The very first thing I noticed in my office was that we have a number of people in Windsor-Sandwich who are looking for work and invariably the issues come down to their training. In Ontario we have a significant problem, not with the majority of the workforce but with the unskilled workforce, that you must recognize, and you must tailor your government programs to help people who are unskilled.

In my community they tend to be middle-aged immigrant people who, when they came to our area, didn't have the benefit of the English-as-a-second-language program. They have had plant shutdowns. People haven't been able to find themselves another job like the one they left, and now they find themselves with no skills. They've been in a plant for the last 20 or 25 years. Many of them are of a variety of ethnic backgrounds. These are the people you are now classifying, as you have since your election date, as those lazy people feeding off the system. I have known some of these people for a long time, and I'll tell you what they need is a real hand up and real education and training programs to give them those opportunities. I find the legislation you introduced last week absolutely punitive. You simply were not up front with the public to tell them what the real story was and what you should be doing as a government to help people.

I notice too that our member from Durham didn't make any notes about what was reported in the Port Perry press when he was just in Port Perry for the opening of something or other: "O'Toole hints he has already had enough." He says, "O'Toole is frustrated over poor response," and he's finding that in fact the people in his riding are not all that supportive, as he would profess that they would be here tonight in the chamber.



We've noticed a whole number of things recently, some of the very difficult things in the area of education —

**Mr Laughren:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm sorry to interrupt the member for Windsor-Sandwich, but I think her speech is so important that there should be a quorum here for it.

**The Speaker:** Is a quorum present?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Papatello:** I'd like to ask the member for Durham, who's so proud of the behaviour of his government, did he know that when he ran for office he was going to have phone installation and construction costs and all these wonderful things added to the Premier's office? Did he know you were going to spend millions of dollars of taxpayers' money refurbishing all of the carpet in the Premier's office? Did he say he was going to spend \$77,000 on new carpet for the Premier?

Premier, let's make a comparison; \$77,000 of new carpeting in the Premier's office here in the Whitney Block likely would have helped four to five families in the riding of Durham East, families who have children with disabilities, families who need special services at home.

I see the member for Durham has decided to sit behind me because he thinks this is so funny. Let me tell you that the families who are not getting these services, whose children are disabled, whom you promised you would not hurt with your policies, are the people I hope are watching the member for Durham East while he goes on in his buffoonery in talking about these things. What we know is that there have been really hurtful, damaging things done to the people in Ontario because of the Ontario government policy, whether that's because of workfare that's going to come through that does not provide child care —

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Papatello:** The dupe behind me I think is going to be seen for what he really is shortly. In any event, there —

**The Speaker:** I caution you.

**Mrs Papatello:** Thanks, Speaker. We talked about Ontario Works a moment earlier. You didn't allow for child care in this concept of Ontario Works. In fact, even in last year's budget when you put \$40 million for child care, you knew in Metro Toronto you had a waiting list of 8,500 people who are looking to put their children in some kind of child care so that they can go out and look for a job, and you didn't even spend the money you put in the budget last year. So now you've got the gall to come out with a budget again and tell us you're giving child tax credits for child care. You didn't even do what you said you would do last year and you've got the nerve to stand up and say, "We're doing what we said we were going to do."

Did you tell the Ontario people you were adding user fees every time you turn around, that our count at last date is over 1,000 new user fees in Ontario compliments of Premier Mike Harris? Is that what he said when he

came to the curb at the airport while he left his airplane running because he didn't have the nerve to walk down the streets of the riding of Windsor-Sandwich with the candidate from the PC Party during the election? I invite the Premier to come back to Windsor-Sandwich today.

Moreover, come back to Windsor-Riverside which has been without an MPP for months already. We've been waiting for a by-election call. Our candidate Gary McNamara is already canvassing the doors. Do you know what he's found out? He's found out that being a Liberal member in this House is a very effective opposition to the bully bulldozer approach of Premier Mike Harris and I hope the people of Windsor-Riverside are going to acknowledge that. As soon as he's got the gall to call a by-election in Windsor-Riverside, we can get busy again and convince the people that here's what it took.

It took the Liberal Party to reinstate those drug user fees that this government put on seniors. Mr Manzone on Lesperance Road, lest we forget, was the first man to say to me very clearly from Windsor-Riverside: "How many months in a year? Does anybody up there know how to count?" Because you stole money from those seniors in Ontario and it took the Liberal caucus to get that reinstated.

When you've got the gall or the nerve to call a by-election in Ontario, specifically in Windsor-Riverside, we plan to invite Premier Mike Harris out. Come walk down the streets of Essex county so we can tell you how we really feel about your government.

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**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I'm disappointed that I have but a minute and 43 seconds. I suppose this is how all of us are going to feel once the jackboots hit the floor and debate —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I would ask the member for Welland-Thorold to withdraw.

**Mr Kormos:** Withdraw. This is what it's going to be like once the second shoe drops and debate in this place is shut down in its entirety so that members who dare — and I predict that it will only be government backbenchers who dare stand up and speak, unless they've had dispatch orders and written remarks prepared for them.

**Mr Pouliot:** Boot camp.

**Mr Kormos:** The alternatives are clear. The alternatives will be boot camp or simply booted out. The lessons have been taught by the member for up around Grey-Owen Sound area. He got the boot. We recall what he had to say about this government. The member for somewhere around Oakville got the boot. We know what he had to say. My friend the member for Wentworth North, Mr Skarica, got the boot. Why? Because they had the courage to speak their minds. They had the courage to try to confront their government and to try to reveal their government for being — well, it's a dictatorship. That's what Toni Skarica said. It's a dictatorship.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Mr Kormos. Your time is up.

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education and Training. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."



All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

I have just received in my hand a note:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education and Training be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997." From the chief government whip.

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I've received in my hand a note:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997." Chief government whip.

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997."

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997."

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997."

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997. Thank you for your assistance in this matter."

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** It will be deferred.

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

Nothing up my sleeve. Presto.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997."

**Mr Bradley:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order —

**The Speaker:** Yes, he can be in the wrong seat.

**Mr Bradley:** Is that right?

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Bradley:** So if we had somebody in a seat right here —

**The Speaker:** You could. You do have somebody in a seat right there.

*Laughter.*

**The Speaker:** Sometimes you just can't resist.

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Natural Resources. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Natural Resources be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997."

Mr Johnson has moved concurrence in supply for the Office of Francophone Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I would like to request the vote on concurrence in supply for the Office of Francophone Affairs be deferred until immediately after question period on June 19, 1997."

That's all? We were just into a roll here.

## JOB GROWTH AND TAX REDUCTION ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CROISSANCE DE L'EMPLOI ET LA RÉDUCTION DES IMPÔTS

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 129, An Act to stimulate job



growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget / Projet de loi 129, Loi visant à stimuler la croissance de l'emploi, à réduire les impôts et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1997.

**M. Gilles Pouliot (Lac Nipigon):** Plus tôt, vous vous souviendrez bien sûr, que l'occasion était donnée aux membres de l'Assemblée législative de parler sur le dernier budget. Même M. Conway a profité de cette occasion pour se prononcer un discours d'une éloquence tout à fait particulière.

It was earlier on that we had the chance under estimates/supply to say a few words about the 1997 Ontario budget and the very painful legacy that this document will have on the people of Ontario, and more specifically, those who are marginalized, those who can least defend themselves, those who are vulnerable. The erosion of the middle class is very evident in the document. It's an encouragement for most people not to get richer, not to go forward but to go backward, for the prejudice, the bias is for those who are already very rich.

Bill 129, on the other hand, is composed of two elements. On the one side, you have some housekeeping which emanates after every budget. Our party, our caucus certainly has no intention of delaying the good work of the House and we will ensure our cooperation with the government in terms of those on Bill 129.

2120

However, let me deal with part I, the Income Tax Act: The personal income tax rate is being reduced to 48% of basic federal for 1997 and being further reduced to 45% of basic federal tax for the 1998 and subsequent taxation years. Earlier on this afternoon I had the opportunity to share with you the opinion of the bond rating agencies: that of Standard and Poor's, based in New York, the Canadian Bond Rating Service, operating out of Montreal, and Dominion Bond Rating Service of Toronto. Those are the people who have spent the past several weeks poring over the books. They've made it their business to scrutinize, to conduct due diligence on the books of large borrowers, and you will attest that the province of Ontario continues to be plagued by decisions to borrow even more.

The decision stems that you can't have it eight different ways. In our personal lives, good advice is to pay your debts. If you have a deficit with credit cards, you do everything to accelerate payments. Then after, you will reap some of the rewards. But the government has not done this. The government has systematically and deliberately, with those tax cuts, made it very difficult to increase the amount of money coming in under the PIT, the provincial income tax, which is, grosso modo, some one third of government revenue.

So the government has gone on a bender, on one big-time party. They've gone to borrow more. Ontarians can no longer shoulder or suffice the debts, so we have to go abroad. When you go abroad, it makes you more vulnerable. You pay the price, for you must compete. So we're in Japanese yen, we're in Deutschmarks, we're in sterling, les francs français, les francs suisses; name it, we're right at the marketplace with cap in hand.

It does not have to be this way, not at all. We have a recovery which is not accompanied by an increase in

jobs. We have a recovery which is not accompanied by increased revenues. In fact it is forecast, predicted, that this year, in 1997, in spite of this robust recovery, the government will take in less money than it did the year before, 1996. The simple reason is that there are fewer dollars; there's a tax cut.

The tax cut in a more prosperous climate after the budget has been balanced, after the debt is starting to be attacked, would paint us another opportunity, a more positive one, a better story indeed. But no, the government has chosen to reward those who are making a big salary, because if you don't make a big buck, you find out that on the one hand the few dollars that you save from the tax cut you'll pick up at the property tax levy, because they're downloading to the municipalities.

Starting on January 1, your township, where you reside, will take on added responsibilities, and they won't fork over the dollars. They will have to pay for that. They'll have to find the extra money. So the small tax cut will take on insignificant proportion. You will hardly notice it. But when you pay piecemeal for services that you never paid for before, the likelihood that more money will come out of your pocket for the same services is real. In fact, we could be in negative territory because la payola, the insatiable appetite of those who make enormous salaries surpassing, exceeding, a quarter of a million dollars a year — those are the people who will benefit the most.

Can you imagine if you hit it lucky? Good fortunes don't pass you by but they stick to you. Is it morally acceptable to have — and I want to wish them well, but I must give you names. They are good people, they have a conscience, but look at the reality of a Frank Stronach. Mr Stronach made well over \$35 million last year with bonuses and with options and with salary. That's \$35 million in one year. I see you shaking your head. One person, one year: \$35 million. That person will save well over \$1 million. That's just the saving on the last two instalments. At the same time, you will hear the deafening sound of a padlock on hospitals.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My apologies to Mr Pouliot, but it's incredibly important that there be quorum here, sir, in view of what he has to say to us, and there isn't one.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would you please check to see if there is a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** I realize that with respect to government members it is, after all, their responsibility to ensure that we have 20 members present.

**The Acting Speaker:** We are debating Bill 129.

**Mr Pouliot:** I'm very much aware that it's 9:30 in the evening and I know that some of the very plush establishments —

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. We're on Bill 129.

**Mr Pouliot:** Yes, Bill 129, that was dreamed and concocted probably at the Toronto Club or one of those



plush establishments that the democratic class does not have access to. I'm on Bill 129, Mr Speaker. Monsieur le Président, permettez-moi.

2130

Allow me a slight departure from form. I wish to thank the people — they're here this evening, they've given up yet one more evening and I know many weekends — with the Ministry of Finance. At every opportunity we are extended as critics the courtesy of extensive briefing. They go well beyond the call of duty to make sure in a non-partisan fashion that the legislation about to be presented is shared equally with the parties of the opposition. I, for one, very much appreciate it and it must be said.

Alas, I cannot in conscience convey the same compliment, the same sentiment to the politicians, to the political masters, the gouvernement du jour, the government of the day. When I see through the legislation that is in front of us that meshing, the web that portrays the Common Sense Revolution being propelled forward, crushing the aspirations, the life of some people, this cannot go under silence. There are Ontarians — women, men, children, seniors — who are hurting and shouldn't be hurting.

The government has a responsibility to do what is morally right. Ask yourself, sir: Does it make any sense for someone who makes \$38 million a year — I know it's extreme, but it's a true story — to pocket one more million dollars in a tax allowance while at the same time hospitals will be closing? To me, it doesn't make all that much sense.

I hear some of the government members say: "What about my children? What kind of future will my children have?" Well, your children, Madame, Monsieur, will be doing very fine. They're privileged by virtue of the family doing quite well. If you're working here, you're doing quite well, thank you. I wish that when we say "children" we would say "other children who are not doing too well."

This country is magnificent. The United Nations has just again, for the fourth consecutive year, proclaimed that Canada is the best country in the world to live in, but it issued some reservations. It said that child poverty was a problem. It also mentioned and warned about the effect, about the tragedy of youth unemployment. The sad reality is that in Ontario, if you are between the ages of 16 and 24, you have one chance in five of not being able to find work.

I don't see anything in the budget that focuses on youth unemployment, that is specifically developed, addressed to our young women, our young men in Ontario between the ages of 16 and 24. Oh, there's a roll of the dice, a game of chance that if we create the climate manna from heaven will come down, will descend, and somehow you'll find a job; you'll be able to flip at the service place, à la McDonald's. You'll get a job maybe at the minimum wage level. I know some members opposite, because I've read their comments in the press and the media, believe that the minimum wage is too high, that it saps the competition — I mean too high for them. They ought to try living on it if they feel it's too high.

People can choose to disregard their own making. There is hardly one ministry that hasn't been gutted. The

Ministry of Environment is a mere shell of what it used to be. The polluters got season's tickets, front row centre. They've given them the key to the marketplace. There's hardly anyone working there any more. They're supposed to monitor themselves, and while many will, some will not. In many cases you have to come down fairly hard on those people.

The document — and I know I am going beyond the reasons for the amendments, but the amendments that are being presented are rather facile, of a facile nature. There is nothing too complex about them. They make it possible to go through the process. In this case, the devil is not in the detail. The culprit is in this document. This is a living document. I can assure you it calls for difficult reading again. People are saying, "Stop borrowing." You have a choice. Either you hit the tax cut — it's \$5.4 billion that you'll have to find someplace; no free lunch, no secrets. Where will you find it? Pray for an ongoing recovery. You're about to mug the teachers. They're next in line. The jig's up. The number came up. There's a billion dollars coming out of the teachers. You know that.

If you're a member of the medical profession — ie, if you're a doctor — then the members will say you belong to the best union. The doctors, you see, did get some compensation. It's going to cost the province about \$500 million more. I know they provide the most essential of services, but talk to me about the people who need it most.

It goes on and on and on, a missed opportunity. Times are pretty good. This recovery is export-driven. Consumers are starting to spend more. On the other hand, some of the excesses of the 1980s are still with us. Consumer debt is at a record high and that's not all that encouraging. The plastic has been going full-time and people have to pay.

You have fewer savings, therefore. We're at an all-time low. Fewer than 25% of the people are maximizing their RRSP opportunities. The average retirement savings plan in Ontario, unfortunately, as elsewhere in Canada, is around \$30,000 to \$31,000. More people than ever have had to go to the RRSP pool of money to take out a few dollars so they can manage and round out the month — this in a period of prosperity? No boom, bust, echo.

Demographics are two thirds of everything indeed, and if you believe this you should be able to present a super proposal and a timetable that give you a direction of where you will spend your service money. Sixty-five per cent of health money is spent on people who are 65 or over. It's a given that individually we shall consume more health money in the last two years of our lives than we did all the previous years, and with the demographics — and it's galloping, it's coming; it's all of us — you will have some added responsibilities and they will have to be addressed.

I see my friend and colleague the minister responsible for seniors. He knows that each and every month in Ontario thousands of people are added not only to the drug program but to supplementary programs. Most of his budgets are open-ended. You have to pay. It's going to cost more. Even if you amend whatever formulary, it's going to cost more.



We have five members; fully one third of our caucus is present, Mr Speaker. There's so much to digest, so much that one could say. Can I suggest to you that I move adjournment of the debate, Mr Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Pouliot has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2142 to 2212.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Ruprecht has moved adjournment of the debate.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Who?

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry. Mr Pouliot has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are seven; the nays are 35.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

My apologies to the member for Parkdale. Further debate?

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I'm pleased to continue debate on Bill 129. As you'll recall, this bill implements key measures of our plan to set Ontario on a course towards hope, opportunity and prosperity. The Minister of Finance introduced a budget on May 6 with several key goals: to remove the burden of debt from our children's shoulders, to let hardworking Ontarians keep more of their money, and to focus on priority services like health care, classroom education and community safety, and also to create a climate of sustainable economic growth and jobs.

Bill 129 delivers on these goals. It delivers on our government's promise to cut taxes, it delivers on our government's commitments to invest in research and development, it delivers on our government's commitment to make Ontario communities safer for our children.

Bill 129 implements the next steps on our personal income tax by reducing the Ontario personal income tax rate from 49% to 48% of basic federal tax for 1997, and to 45% of basic federal tax for 1998. We are delivering on the 30% tax cut. This government is committed to creating an environment that will attract investment to our province and thereby create jobs for Ontarians.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Referring specifically to standing order 23(d) which reflects long-standing tradition — I'm sure the member for Nepean would be familiar with it — and which prohibits people from reading speeches, the member clearly was reading his speech. That's contrary to the standing order. The standing orders require you to call the member to order if indeed he conducts himself in this unparliamentary manner.

**The Acting Speaker:** I want to address my comments to the member for Welland-Thorold. Indeed that is a point of order. But the standing order says "at length." I think it is quite common to refer to written material for short periods of time. I'll try to keep a count of that.

**Mr Grimmett:** I want to continue with my discussion about Bill 129. Bill 129 implements the sales tax exemption for machinery, equipment and processing materials used for both manufacturing and in research and development. Bill 129 extends the sales tax exemption to include equipment used for research and investigation purchased by non-profit medical research institutions.

Most importantly, Bill 129 deals with the litany of debt that was created by the previous government. It was certainly heartwarming to me to listen to the comments of the member for Lake Nipigon, who went on and on to caution our government about the perils of debt. I can recall September 6, 1990, a day that will go down in infamy in Ontario history. It was the day the NDP achieved power in Ontario. I can well remember the shudders that went up and down my spine. Certainly over the period of time the NDP were in government, many of the concerns I had at that time, in September 1990, were realized when they brought in deficit after deficit.

For the member for Lake Nipigon to raise concerns about debt indicated to me that the third party has gone through a metamorphosis. They now are starting to realize that one has to be concerned about debt when you're in government. It certainly is good advice that the member for Lake Nipigon brought us in cautioning us on the perils of debt. I think the people of Ontario recognize that this government is very concerned about the perils of debt. That is one of the main planks in this bill.

To continue the support that we have given the construction industry, Bill 129 also extends the land transfer tax rebate for first-time home buyers of new homes. This has proven to be successful. There's been a dramatic upturn in the sale of new homes, and in the construction industry on first-time homes. Over \$16 million in land transfer tax has been refunded.

We're also doubling the fines for selling or supplying liquor to a minor or allowing a minor to consume liquor on a licensed premise, and doubling the fine for selling or supplying tobacco to a minor.

It's important for the people of Ontario to recognize that the kinds of provisions we're bringing in in Bill 129 have led to real growth in Ontario.

2220

In the most recent forecast made by the Royal Bank of Canada, they've indicated that they expect the Ontario economy to grow in excess of all other provinces in Canada except Alberta. The Royal Bank of Canada, which hasn't necessarily been the strongest supporter of our government over the time we've been in power, has indicated that they expect real gross domestic product will grow in Ontario by 3.3% in 1997 and 3.6% in 1998. They're predicting stronger economic growth in Ontario in 1997 and 1998, led by the manufacturing and residential construction parts of the economy. That is because of low interest rates, lower taxes and strong pent-up consumer demand.

The forecast of the Royal Bank of Canada says, "In Ontario, economic growth should be led by the goods-producing sector, especially residential construction and manufacturing, resulting in stronger consumer spending, while exports and private investments should remain strong."



The Conference Board of Canada has said: "This year's economic growth leaders will be Ontario and Alberta. Strong consumer spending and continued gains in export-oriented industries will propel economic activity in Ontario."

Scotiabank has said, "Ontario's economy is shifting into higher gear as residential construction and business investment add to the impetus from exports."

I don't need to remind most of the government members, but some of the other members need to be reminded that Ontario employment rose by 40,600 net new jobs in May, bringing the job gain over the last three months to 101,000 new jobs, triggering a drop in the provincial unemployment rate to 8.5% in May. Ontario retail sales have increased in four of the past five months, rising 0.8% in March following a 2.1% gain in February. Over the first five months of 1997, housing starts in Ontario are up 48.1% from a year ago.

The good news continues. The Ontario help-wanted index, a leading indicator of economic activity, is up again in May, up 2.8% in May. Auto sales, a very important indicator of the health of the economy: up 31% in unit terms and up 37% in April compared to the same period a year ago. The 1997 Ontario and Toronto housing markets are robust.

Canadian business confidence is at a record level in 1997. The conference board reported that business confidence rose 4.6% in 1997: In 1997's first quarter, 50.6% of businesses cited Ontario as the most desirable province in Canada for investment.

According to Statistics Canada's recent investment intentions survey, Ontario business plans to raise plant and equipment spending by 4.5% in 1997, following a rise of 10.2% in 1996. Non-residential building permits are up strongly in the month of April. Ontario manufacturing shipments are up strongly in the first quarter of 1997. Ontario exports are up in the first quarter of 1997. Ontario wholesale trade continues its upward trend.

All these indicators are continued good news for the province, the kind of changes Bill 129 is bringing in. I could go on to indicate that Bill 129 also deals with safety in Ontario communities. What we want to do is make sure that Ontario's communities continue to be safe. We want to crack down on the kind of crime that people in Ontario are looking for us to cut down on.

Ontario farmers are very important to the Ontario economy. In Bill 129 we're trying to extend the sales tax rebate to farmers for materials used in farm structures. I've had the opportunity to speak to farmers in my riding. As you know, Muskoka-Georgian Bay is a leading agricultural area in Ontario. We have quite a few farms, especially in the Simcoe county part of my riding, and the sales tax rebate is something they've certainly welcomed. I can see they are continuing to invest in their structures on their farms, and they find that the tax rebate has benefited them a great deal and allowed them to invest further in their farm and other areas as well. This can reduce their costs when they're building or improving their farm facilities.

There are other provisions in the budget bill which will have a positive impact in my riding. The land transfer tax that used to apply at a higher rate to non-resident pur-

chasers of agricultural and recreational property has now been dropped. That's going to have a very significant impact in my part of the province, where purchases by non-residents are quite a significant source of economic activity. The people in the real estate business in my riding are very happy to see that our government has seen it's not necessary to continue to tax non-resident purchasers of that kind of property at the higher rate, which used to be 20% of the purchase price.

The provision in Bill 129 that doubles the fine for selling or supplying liquor to a minor is something that I think is needed. In talking to school principals and the parents of students in the local high schools, there's great concern about the consumption of liquor by minors. Bill 129 also doubles the fines for selling or supplying tobacco to a minor: a very big problem in our schools in Ontario, something we need to crack down on. We really have to find a way to deal with the kinds of problems that exist in schools today. The provision regarding the sale of tobacco is a particularly important one, and it will allow the law enforcement officials to impose a heavy penalty on those people who are in the business of selling tobacco to minors.

Another matter that we have to deal with in Bill 129 is of great interest to people in my riding and throughout the province, and that is the tax cut and the impact the tax cut is having. The tax cut is having a very positive impact in my riding, and you can see it by the job growth statistics in the province. These job growth statistics are very similar in my part of the province, where the amount of employment created over recent months has been very encouraging. I know from talking to local businesses that there is a very good feeling that this is going to be a strong growth year in Muskoka-Georgian Bay. The confidence of the retail people in my riding is very high. I hear very few indications that the tax cut has had anything but a positive impact in my riding.

When it comes to labour income, it's very good news to report that labour income in Ontario rose 1.5% in the first quarter of 1997, following a 1.8% advance in 1996. For a long period in Ontario, there was very little growth in the level of employment income in Ontario, but now as we pull out of the recession, you're seeing quite an increase, particularly in the private sector, in wage rates.

We have some quotes here from the local press.

The Ottawa Sun: "The Ottawa area was responsible for two thirds of research and development in Canada." So the budget has to be good news.

The London Free Press: "Some of the tax measures will make us more competitive, especially when we're competing with places south of the border for new development."

Suzanne Fortier, vice-principal of research at Queen's University: "A new research and development fund recently announced by the provincial government will help Queen's to attract and retain world-class researchers and is a sound investment in Ontario's future."

These quotes have to do with the considerable encouragement in Bill 129 of further research and development in Ontario. Through the creation of a research and development challenge fund, the government is providing



us with some of the tools needed to further strengthen the vibrant research environment that has been built in Ontario universities. This promotes research in all its manifestations, from the basic discovery phase to development, technology transfer and commercialization.

2230

The new research and development tax incentives will help us in our effort to exploit the results of research for the benefit of society. The University of Toronto is affiliated with the research and development institute in Midland in my riding, and the institute is certainly looking at exploiting these advantageous changes in Bill 129 which provide useful, new opportunities for the university sector and the research and development sector to get tax credits and to further develop opportunities for job development.

Here's a quote from Robert Prichard, a well-known supporter of our government, president of the University of Toronto: "The Ontario budget's recognition of the vital role of research and development in building future prosperity for the province is very encouraging. The budget represents an important first step that puts strengthening research and development among the province's critical priorities and recognizes the role of Ontario's universities in ensuring a strong economic future." It's nice to see Mr Prichard making some positive comments about our government.

**Interjection:** That's where you went to school, isn't it, Bill? That's your alma mater.

**Mr Grimmett:** That's one of my alma maters, that's right. He's a former professor of mine in law school.

In Bill 129 we have changes to the capital tax and retail sales tax to remove barriers to research and development. These are all very positive steps that have been requested by people in the research and development sector and I'm sure they're going to be pleased when they're able to take advantage of the changes.

There has been very significant development in Ontario in recent years with the moving picture industry. The evidence of that is actually very close by when you walk in the vicinity of Queen's Park and you see the number of movie crews that are up and running and working on films. There are changes to the capital tax and retail sales tax, and also we have a new 15% computer animation and special effects tax credit to further stimulate that kind of activity in Ontario. We really have a developing expertise in Ontario in the movie industry. I know from the people I've spoken to in that industry that they come to Ontario not just because of the lower tax rates and the tax credits they get here but because of the developing expertise we have, especially right here in Toronto.

Tax changes to encourage new technology: We're removing the tax on technology transfers. All these changes are very positive ones for the research and development part of the economy. They're the kind of changes we need to bring about to stimulate job growth and the kind of activity we haven't seen in Ontario for the last 10 years.

Those are my comments. I was pleased to participate in the debate on Bill 129.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I'm interested in some of the comments the member for Muskoka-

Georgian Bay made. He spoke of "a litany of debt." I think those are the words he used.

Let me tell the member across, if your 1997 budget plan is on course, at the year 2001 the total debt will be roughly \$120 billion. The Liberals will be responsible for \$6 billion of that. The NDP will be responsible —

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** That's outrageous.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** You're right it's outrageous, absolutely outrageous, because the NDP will be responsible for \$62 billion of that debt, and do you know what the government, the Conservative Party, will be responsible for? Fifty-two billion dollars of that debt. That's outrageous. I agree with you. I can't believe it. The great fiscal conservatives, of a total debt of \$120 billion in the year 2001, will be responsible for \$52 billion.

Do you know what? During the life of this government — and it isn't going to last all that long — they will have increased that debt roughly \$17 billion to \$19 billion, and every penny of it will be borrowed money. Coincidentally, that just about equals the tax cut.

Can you believe it? Mike Harris stood up here one day and said: "The province of Ontario is bankrupt, but do you know what I'm going to do, shareholders? I'm going to go out and borrow \$19 billion and give you a dividend." That also is outrageous. "At the same time, I'm going to take \$1.3 billion out of hospitals and I'm going to take \$100 billion out of education." That also is outrageous.

Tonight I want to speak a little bit about debt. The Ontario budget says an awful lot about debt and deficit. I've told you what that outrageous debt is going to be over the next few years, that is going to have been borrowed by this government, every single penny of it. But to accumulate that debt you have to incur deficits. We can go through the budget and we can tell you what the deficit is going to be each year of this budget. It's right here in your own budget: in 1997-98 a \$6.6-billion deficit; in 1998-99 a \$4.8-billion deficit — all of this borrowed money, of course; if you're running a deficit you don't have the cash; in 1999 — I guess they're still going to run their mandate till 1999; they have the right to do so — a \$2.6-billion deficit.

I want to talk to you about the human deficit. It's the one you can't apply dollars to. Do you know how they're going to create this human deficit? They're going to do it on the backs of the people of Ontario, and they're going to do it because they want to give a tax cut to their rich friends. They don't have to give this tax cut, because, as the Premier said earlier, the province is bankrupt. They don't have to give a dividend to anybody because a bankrupt company wouldn't give a dividend to anybody. But they're going to do it anyway. What does it result in? It results in a human deficit.

Mike Harris has made his choice. I'm going to ask the citizens of the province of Ontario, how about you? What would you choose, a tax cut or quality health care? Think about it. What would you choose, a tax cut or better schools? Think about it. A tax cut or reducing the deficit? A tax cut or new jobs? A tax cut or fighting child poverty?

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** Get them both.



**Mr Crozier:** He's spouting off in a facetious way. But I tell you, by borrowing \$5 billion for a tax cut, you're not going to do all those things without hurting somebody. I know how I would choose. I know how my leader would choose. I know how Dalton McGuinty would choose. He'd say, "I would choose people over a tax cut."

**Mr Hudak:** So you like taxes.  
2240

**Mr Crozier:** Well, you like tax cuts and you like borrowing every bit to do it. You like spending half a million dollars on your boss's office. Is that okay? That's outrageous.

But let me go on about health care, our health care deficit. Robert Fisher on Global TV asked the then leader of the third party, "Can you guarantee us tonight that your pledge to protect health care will mean that you will not close hospitals?" In a televised debate on May 18, 1995, the now Premier of this province said, "Certainly I can guarantee you, Robert, it's not my plan to close hospitals." Those were carefully chosen words, but it certainly is his plan today.

We can talk about hospital closures to date in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Ottawa, Pembroke, London and Metro Toronto. The only new money in health care we're going to find in this budget is for nurses' severances and for closing hospitals. Today's budget, this budget right here, the 1997 Ontario budget, confirms Mike Harris's plan to cut \$507 million from Ontario hospitals, and we think that's going to be done at the expense of patient care. Mike Harris's overall plan is to cut \$1.3 billion from hospitals. If you don't think there will be a human deficit in those figures, as I said last night in comments on another speech, the sky in your world has got a different colour than the sky in mine and it's not blue.

Our learning deficit: A wise man said, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." If we cut education spending when we should be investing, we short-change our children, our province and our country. Today's budget, the 1997 Conservative budget, cuts \$124 million from education. Massive spending cuts have already been included in the Tory plans and executed in the Tory plans and have crippled educational programs: \$145-million cuts to junior kindergarten, \$150-million cuts to adult education — and we had 1,000 people surrounding this Legislature last week concerned about the cuts to adult education — \$39-billion cuts to school buses, \$163 million in cuts to classroom spending and \$167 million in cuts to school construction and maintenance.

Mike Harris's education reform has forced 25 school boards to cancel junior kindergarten classes in Ontario, and if you think education's expensive today, try ignorance. Twenty-three boards have had to reduce special education programs, 44 boards have had to reduce transportation services, 42 boards have cut custodial and maintenance programs and seven boards have had to cut library resources.

My colleague earlier today in his speech spoke about the cost of post-secondary education, how the baby-boomers — let me look around. Yeah, there are a couple of baby-boomers tonight. A few more of them are as old as I am so they're not exactly —

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** I'm one of them.

**Mr Crozier:** Who said that? Ed, if you're a baby-boomer, I'm not even out of diapers yet. No, there are a few baby-boomers in here tonight. They can say that there should be increases in the costs for education because their education they got rather cheaply, very cheaply. But that doesn't matter today. Jack up the cost of tuition fees. But where are they going to go to get the jobs? Where are the graduates from the universities getting the jobs today? I think that should be as much of a concern as tuition fees.

Think about it. This isn't just a deficit in the form of dollars. This isn't a \$6.6-billion deficit this year. What we have to think about is our children's deficit. If we can't put our children first, then we're a lost society. We could invest in our children because economists tell us that we will achieve savings in the long run. But we do it because we value our children. That's what my leader, Dalton McGuinty, says.

One in five children in Ontario live at or below the poverty line. That's outrageous. Four hundred and eighty-seven thousand children in Ontario depend on welfare. That's outrageous. In the greater Toronto area alone, 71,000 children depend on food banks to survive. Almost half of all the people using food banks in Toronto are children and, so far, 30,000 kids have been denied kindergarten.

Tory bungling of the family support plan — and we've gone over this and over it again and we've heard the Attorney General give us all kinds of excuses — no action, just excuses — but the Tory bungling of the family support plan has put the welfare of thousands of children at risk because of delayed and lost child support payments.

Lastly, Teacher, or rather Speaker —

**Mrs Johns:** Teacher?

**Mr Crozier:** Well, I could learn something from the Speaker and so could all of you. By spending \$1 a day on children in need, it's a proven statistic that we will save \$7 later in health, welfare and justice costs. Our children's deficit, in the words of the honourable member across at the beginning of this debate, is outrageous. I agree. Only one in six children in need of psychiatric care is receiving treatment.

Think of this: Mike Harris's \$17-million cut to children's aid societies has restricted vital services to Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. Some 83% of children served by children's aid societies live in poverty. Think of it.

Our employment deficit: It seems to me that somewhere in the 1995 campaign I heard the figure of something in excess of 700,000 jobs that were promised by the now Premier of the province. Mike Harris, along with many of us, agrees that governments don't create jobs. Business creates jobs. Dalton McGuinty has said, in our document entitled *The Human Deficit*, that yes, indeed, businesses do create jobs.

In today's global marketplace, business brings jobs to stable and prosperous jurisdictions with a solid economic infrastructure. But that solid economic infrastructure includes good schools, a highly skilled workforce that results from good schools, strong research facilities and



a strategy for building for the future. You don't build the future by taking blocks out of the foundation.

When Mike Harris came to power, the unemployment rate was about 8.7%. It has since climbed to 9%. Half a million Ontarians remain out of work. Someone might say the difference between 8.7% and 9% is not a lot. Well, if you're in that additional 0.3% who don't have a job, it means an awful lot.

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Mike Harris has promised us 145,000 jobs a year in the Common Sense Revolution. The government's own numbers in the budget show that more than two and a half years into your mandate, the job creation performance will be a discouraging 165,000 jobs behind this target. Those aren't easy to make up. It's a bit like a race. If you keep pace, that seems not too bad. If you start to drop behind, that distance becomes more and more and more difficult to make up. Frankly, we're lagging behind in that job creation objective.

Many employers can't find the highly trained staff they need, and yet this government is taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of education. Somehow that doesn't make sense. Again, to use the words of my colleague that she called across at the outset of this debate, that's outrageous. Young people —

**Mrs Johns:** You're outrageous.

**Mr Crozier:** She says I'm outrageous. Get up and talk about it. Your turn will come. You get up and refute some of the figures that are in your own budget, your own job figures. Put your jobs where your mouth is. Young people continue to lose jobs at an alarming rate, and we've talked a lot about youth employment. Youth unemployment for the first three months of 1997 was 18.5%, up almost 2% from the previous year.

I want to talk about the real cost of the Harris tax cut. Again in the words of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, "This is a government that is in such a mad rush to give away a tax cut that they've forgotten about the future."

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** He's mentioned his name about 10 times now.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Boost those poll numbers.

**Mr Crozier:** Mike Harris will cost the Ontario government, I remind you — I missed that. As I mentioned earlier, his tax cut will cost the Ontario government, the citizens of the province of Ontario, \$5.5 billion a year, money that could have gone on health care, education, children's services, and yes, even deficit reduction.

He had a choice. I don't think any of us here in the income bracket that we're in, and many in the province of Ontario who have income brackets much higher than ours, would argue that taxes are too low. Most will say that taxes are too high and that we've hit the wall. But the way to reduce the deficit and continue to have an Ontario that we want to live in, a place where we can have our children grow in good care, isn't the Ontario that needs a tax cut. We've been paying those taxes.

**Mr Kormos:** Full employment.

**Mr Crozier:** Full employment is mentioned by the member from Welland. Absolutely. Full employment creates more money. But we don't need a tax cut when we could have worked on the deficit, spent smarter in

health care, which the minister is telling us he's trying to do, spent smarter in education. Some \$500 million, though, of that Tory tax cut goes to individuals with incomes over \$250,000. Give me a break. Even if we've hit the tax wall, if you earn a quarter of a million dollars a year in this province and can't afford to pay the taxes that we've been paying for a little while longer until we get our finances in order, you've got a problem. A hell of a lot of people, by far the majority of people in the province, live on a lot less than \$250,000 a year.

I think the government's tax cuts are too deep, they're going too fast, and these tax cuts have created a human deficit. I just want to summarize.

To help pay for this tax cut, Mike Harris has downloaded \$1.3 billion in new costs to Ontario's municipalities, resulting, we feel — and I'm a past mayor, a past municipal official. I'm willing to wait and see if we aren't right that this downloading will result in massive property tax increases in municipalities across Ontario.

He's increased tuition fees by 30% and at the same time has cut \$400 million from school boards, which again is forcing property tax increases and school board user fees. The \$5.5-billion tax cut has already made it more difficult to fight Ontario's fiscal deficit, because you've reduced your revenues. It's right here in Mike Harris's budget. Revenue in 1997-98 is going to be roughly almost \$1 billion less than the year before. Every penny of this tax cut is borrowed money, and I told you what the accumulated deficit is going to be.

On budget cuts, here's what Mike Harris promised in a CBLT interview on May 30, 1995: "But I say to people, if it isn't in the plan," that being the Common Sense Revolution, "it isn't cut. So don't believe those people who are trying to tell you otherwise." Well, it wasn't in the plan, but there were \$3 billion in cuts that weren't identified in that plan so far.

On education, Mike Harris says in the Common Sense Revolution, "Classroom funding for education will be guaranteed." Here's what we have, what Mike Harris did: Provincial cuts have forced 25 school boards to cancel their junior kindergarten, 23 boards have reduced special education programs, and so on as I mentioned earlier.

Hospital closures: Again the Premier said to Robert Fisher, "Certainly I can guarantee you that it's not my plan to close hospitals." To date, 22 hospitals have been slated for closure. Many more could be closed before the next election.

What did Mike Harris say about jobs? What did he promise about jobs? Well, 725,000 new jobs, it says in the Common Sense Revolution. Right now, two years into their plan, they're 165,000 behind that target.

What did Mike Harris promise when it comes to law enforcement? "Funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed," and, "Again, any savings we find in our justice system through greater efficiencies will be reinvested to ensure public safety in our streets and in our homes." The Solicitor General's budget has been slashed by \$41.2 million. The Attorney General's budget has been slashed by \$176 million. These include \$17.1 million in cuts to the OPP, \$8.2 million in cuts to policing services, \$38 million in cuts to justice services, \$11.8 million in cuts to court administration and \$8.3



million in cuts to legal services to the crown. That's where Mike Harris said that funding will be guaranteed.

I want to talk for the last few minutes about something that wasn't in the Common Sense Revolution. It won't affect the deficit, but it will need some funding. But the government's going to make money on this.

**2300**

For the last month I've been pleading, mainly to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, for funding to be made available through the Shoreline Property Assistance Act. It requires some cash, but the government's actually going to make money on this because it can charge interest. There has been anywhere between \$2 million and \$5 million in damage on the north shore of Lake Erie, which includes part of the county of Kent, Essex county's north shore of Lake Erie shoreline, as well as south of Lake St Clair.

I want to use the last two minutes to make a plea to this government on an issue that can make them a few dollars. Under the shoreline protection act, all these people want is to have some funding provided so that they can repair damage from high water levels and storms. What does the minister say after more than a month? "Thank you for your letter of April 25," and this one's dated May 29. God knows, we could have had any other number of storms or damage in the meantime. He says, "The Shoreline Property Assistance Act is not presently active." I don't know what that really means. If you go to the Revised Statutes of Ontario, it's still a valid statute; the Shoreline Property Assistance Act is right there. But he says it's not actually active. No wonder it isn't active. There weren't many storms, I guess, that required the money.

All we're asking that he do is go to the Treasurer, go to the Minister of Finance and say: "Finance Minister, I've got something I need that isn't going to affect your budget one iota. In fact, it's going to make you a couple of bucks." Because the people who have storm damage along the shores of Lake Erie and Lake St Clair can't borrow money from banks. Probably part of the reason is they're lending all their money to the government, for crying out loud — they need \$5 billion; these folks just need a few million dollars, a little bit of assistance that they're willing to pay for.

I put that in because it's something that really won't have a big affect on the total spending of this government, which is going to be in the area of \$54 billion, so when it comes to Essex and Kent counties, just lend us a couple of million, would you?

Beyond that, I ask my colleagues on this side of the floor, I ask the government: When you think of the deficit, when you crow about how you're going to reduce the deficit over the next couple or three years, just don't think about it in dollars, because, yes, that's outrageous if you simply think about it in terms of dollars. When you think about the deficit over the next few years, think of the human deficit.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** Although I appreciated some comments from the member for Essex South — not many, but some — I think the member

should go back to and take our new curriculum in math. When we took over as a government, we had \$11.8 billion we were spending more than we were taking in. As we reduce that over the years, of course you're going to increase the debt. You don't need to be a rocketship scientist to figure that one out.

What credibility does the member have, him and his party? With the NDP, in the last, lost 10 years, they increased taxes 65 times. Spend, spend, spend. Then what did they say in the red book during the election in 1995? What were they going to do? What did they say? That raising taxes also kills jobs. They were going to cut taxes by 5% during their first term. They were going to repeal the 5% tax on auto insurance. They were going to give first home buyers a land transfer tax rebate. They were going to reinstate tax rebates for money spent by property owners on forest management. They were going to give small businesses tax credits and on and on.

Now what he stands up and says is, "We're against your government because you're going to give a tax credit or tax decreases and you're cutting spending. We don't agree with you at all on that." They're living up to their motto, like they always have, flip-flop, flip-flop, flip-flop. Where are you really?

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I just want to congratulate my colleague from Essex South. He brought a perspective that I thought was interesting.

My friend Froese here has just reminded me of something. On this question of the deficit, as I've said many times before, there is a lot of blame to go around. I was one of those who accepted the summons to office in 1985. The government we replaced, a government led by Frank Miller, ably supported by Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, gave us a spending plan in 1985 that had roughly a \$3 billion deficit on a \$30 billion spending plan.

When I came here in 1975, a very able Conservative finance minister named Darcy McKeough presented to this Legislature a budget, 22 years ago, with a deficit of about \$1.8 billion on an expenditure plan of, I think, about \$13 billion. Is there blame to go around?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Absolutely, I say to my abstemious friend the member for Huron. Let's just cut the crap about the 10 lost years because the Miller —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** I think the point that's been made here is a good one tonight. Of course there was deficit piled up particularly between 1990 and 1995, for a lot of reasons. I'm just telling you that in 1985 a Miller-Davis-Eves government gave to the incoming Liberals a spending plan that showed a \$3 billion deficit on a \$30 billion, \$32 billion spending plan. Let she without sin cast the first —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Further questions or comments.

**Mr Kormos:** I'm pleased to comment on the remarks from the member for Essex South. I was impressed by his recitation of the real deficit that's being generated by this government, in addition to the additional 22 billion bucks these guys are borrowing, adding to our provincial debt, to help, merely help, finance their tax break for the very



rich, two thirds of which is going to go to the top 10% of income earners. Not a penny of that tax break will be responsible for the creation of but one job.

I find it remarkable that the member for St Catharines-Brock could continue to embrace this Reagan-Thatcher philosophy when in Niagara region, among his riding, as well as Niagara centre, Welland-Thorold, Niagara Falls, Erie-Lincoln et al, unemployment has grown to 10.9%. That, my friends, is a conservative figure, because unemployment among people under 25 in Niagara region is twice that. That's two years after this government came to power — more jobless in this province than there were two years ago, to this day.

This tax break is all about paying off this government's, Mike Harris's and the Tories' rich buddies, the Frank Stronachs of Ontario etc. It's all about that and nothing about job creation. Every relevant, meaningful, economic theory illustrates clearly that the sort of tax cuts for the very wealthiest that this government is committed to and remains committed to, notwithstanding the damage they create to public institutions, to public education, to health care, to families, to small communities and to young working people, who dearly want to work but are being denied work because of this government's policies — their denial of the reality of their impact on our public institutions is shameful.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Further questions or comments.

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**Mr Hudak:** If you look at the figures from Niagara, the facts of the matter are that there are more people working today in the Niagara Peninsula than there were when this government took over. In fact a newspaper article Mr Kormos may have read recently in the Welland Tribune, a fine newspaper in the area, said there were 5,000 more jobs created, part of the 41,000 new jobs I think in May, in the Niagara area, and there have been 5,000 additionally who have joined the workforce, which is remarkable. People that had given up totally on finding a job under the NDP now are coming back in the workforce. People are moving into Ontario looking for a job.

It used to be, under the government of Mr Kormos and Mr Rae, that people came to Ontario only to get on to welfare. If they wanted a job, they would leave the province. But now we see the change. People are coming into the workforce looking for jobs, moving to Ontario because they see hope and opportunity again.

As to the comments of the member for Essex South, who seems in his philosophy to believe that there are choices between a tax cut and a deficit, in fact we've cut taxes, the deficit is going down towards a balanced budget for 2001; in fact we're ahead of our figures. Tax cut versus revenue: We've cut taxes and revenue has increased. Tax cut or jobs: Heck, we have a tax cut and we've seen jobs in the last few months that are growing to a tune of 1,000 jobs a day.

The Liberal member misses the point, that tax cuts create jobs, which means more revenue, which means more money coming in for programs like health care, more money you can spend on health care, and a better education system with a tougher curriculum so students learn things quicker and harder and better with testing and a better role for parents.

**Mr Kormos:** No teachers. Contracted out.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Welland-Thorold, come to order.

**Mr Hudak:** Then when they graduate from an improved education system in Ontario, the jobs will be there because of the actions of this government. So when the member says tax cuts versus deficit, revenue and jobs, we're having them all: more jobs, more revenue, a lower deficit with the tax cut.

**Mr Crozier:** To the member for St Catharines-Brock who suggested I take the new math curriculum, we'll see if it's in place by September 1. But you've thrown the gauntlet to me; I'll throw it back to you. I'll put my math up against yours any day of the week, and it'll all come out the same. It will come out that of the total debt at the end of your term in office, your government will be responsible for 43% of it: \$52 billion.

**Mr Froese:** Don't you know what compound is?

**Mr Crozier:** It doesn't take a rocket scientist. You said it. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to develop a budget like this with the deficit that it has in it.

The member for Niagara South says I missed the point. I think you missed the point. You talk about money; I talk about people. You talk about a deficit of \$5 billion; I talk about a human deficit. You talk about cutting people on welfare; I talk about a government that spends half a million dollars on the Premier's office.

**Mr Hudak:** You do.

**Mr Crozier:** You miss the point. It's outrageous.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** It's a pleasure to speak to this budget bill tonight. I have to tell you I do have a beef with this tax cut, and that's what I'm going to speak to tonight. But I have to tell you there is a cesspool of arrogance that oozes forth from those Tory benches opposite. In case they don't understand the word "cesspool," it's a septic tank of arrogance that oozes forth from the other side on a daily basis. You can feel it. I feel it here, and I'm sure those watching feel it as well, on a daily basis.

But I want to direct all of my attention or most of my attention to the tax cut and the implications of that tax cut on all of Ontario. This government is very proud of their income tax cut, very proud. It is a signature piece and it is a highlight certainly of their budget. All of us really have come to understand that this tax cut, 60% of which goes to the highest and most privileged people in this province, will not benefit Ontario, except those wealthy Ontarians: 60%.

We've got to borrow \$22 billion to be able to support their rich friends on the other side. Imagine five bank presidents who earn \$1.5 million, \$1.6 million, \$1.7 million. That's a lot of bucks. At the end of their tax cut, these people are going to earn more or less \$120,000. Think of that, Speaker, because I'm sure in your riding, you may have a banker or two, it's possible, but you've got a whole lot of poor people in your riding, and I'm sure that you've met many who continue to ask you, "Speaker," or in your case "MPP for Riverdale" —

**Mr Kormos:** One moment, please. Speaker, there's no quorum.



**Mr Marchese:** Again? It happens all the time in this place.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Fort York.

**Mr Marchese:** Imagine that. I'm sure you meet a lot of people in your riding, Madam Speaker, who come to you and say, "When is this income tax cut coming?" They ask you because at the end of that paycheque for the last year or year and half, two years now, they are not seeing the fruits of this income tax cut. Why? Because if they're only earning \$20,000, \$25,000, \$30,000, there's nothing to be seen. But bankers, these rich pals of theirs, the ones who believe that we should be cutting social programs, the same types as these Tories on this side, they gain a great deal of money and they like the tax cut.

They have all the basic necessities that they need and they're not about to go and buy things that poor people, working people, low-income people would otherwise buy if they got the money. These banker friends of theirs don't need any of these necessities; they already have them. In fact, too many. It's true, Mr Young, too many. Why continue to give money to those who already have? Why redistribute the wealth even more to those who have? Why would you do that? Why would these Tories do that? Except that it fits into the ideology of these people over here.

We have galloping unemployment and they brag about all the jobs they're creating, galloping unemployment not just here in this province but across Canada, and they brag about the great things that this budget does and continues to do. Yet unemployment continues to remain high. How do they justify that? How do they justify an unemployment rate that is unacceptable to most humans — humans I say — except these people on the other side.

We have unacceptable levels of unemployment among our young people, and these people brag about the number of jobs that they're creating. Well, it's not doing it. Their income tax cut is not doing it, and I'm going to read here, very shortly, from an economist, Arthur Donner —

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** I do not believe a quorum is present.

**The Acting Speaker:** You're calling a quorum? Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Fort York.

2320

**Mr Marchese:** I appreciate the assistance from the member for Cambridge in this regard because I know the member for Cambridge was listening very attentively. I could tell. I am going to quote to him something from one of the economists I have read in one of the articles the Star prints out called the Atkinson Letter. One of these economists is being interviewed. I know the member for Cambridge is about to listen to this before he leaves. This is what he said about this topic, member for Cambridge:

"I would say that to some degree all government instruments are blunt instruments. But I believe the tax-

cutting solutions being proposed and implemented today are basically ideologically driven." That's what this economist says. "They are not really designed to create jobs although they are sold that way to the public. The tax cuts are ultimately for the purpose of eroding the role of government and the expectations people have of government."

It goes on, and I know the member for Cambridge is not interested in this kind of stuff. That's why he left. But for the rest who are still here, this is what he goes on to say: "From what I've been reading in the papers lately —

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I think the honourable member knows that his comments about the member not being here are out of order.

**Mr Marchese:** They're not out of order. Sit down, Frank.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Calm down, calm down. I must admit I must not have been listening at that precise moment. I didn't hear the member for Fort York say that, but the member for York-Mackenzie is quite correct and I think the member knows he should not refer to members being absent from the House.

**Mr Marchese:** I should not refer to members what, sorry? I didn't hear.

**The Acting Speaker:** I think the member for Fort York is aware that the rules are very clear about that. You do not refer to members when they are absent from the House.

**Mr Marchese:** He was leaving. As I was speaking, he was leaving this chamber and that's the comment I made.

**Mr Kormos:** Which was rude.

**Mr Doyle:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I would like to know how the member knew he was leaving.

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat, please, member for Fort York. Thank you.

**Mr Marchese:** If it is not acceptable to speak about members who are now no longer here, that's fine. I was just referring to a member who was on his way out and that's what I was saying.

So the economist, Mr Donner —

**The Acting Speaker:** I just want to be really clear: I don't think you understood what I said before. You referred again to the member leaving the chamber. As you know, under the rules you should not do that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** I want to continue with my remarks, so I will repeat what this economist said.

"These tax cuts are not really designed to create jobs. Although they are sold that way to the public" — and I have to tell you this government does exactly that through its propaganda on a regular basis. They continue to sell this tax cut to the public as a job creation idea. That's what you guys do every day that you have an opportunity to raise this issue.

This economist is quite clear: They do not create jobs, and he argues they're not designed for that purpose either. They're ultimately for the purpose of eroding the role of government and the expectations people have of



government. That too fits into the ideology of this government. They are reducing the role of government. It is the intent of everything this government does to diminish its functions, to diminish its role, and they do it continually with every bill they present in this House.

I know that some of you love to quote economists as well, and it's important to listen to this particular view. He continues:

"From what I have been reading in the papers lately, many ordinary citizens are not really sure they want a tax cut if the tradeoff is that their son or daughter will not be able to afford university or the local hospital will close and their aging parent will have to travel farther in an emergency. Actually, I would support an income tax cut as long as it wasn't accompanied by a matching government spending cut.

"If you look at what the Kennedy administration's income tax cut in 1961 did for the American economy, you will see that it can work. But that tax cut didn't have corresponding spending cuts. In this sort of fiscal environment, we're not going to see any increases in government spending so we need tax cuts to spur consumer spending. But they shouldn't be an excuse to cut government." That's what these people do.

He's asked questions by the Atkinson Letter folks which are: "So you would support a tax cut as long as government spending remained at the same level? But should the tax cuts be across the board? Everyone gets a break?" Mr Donner, the economist, answers: "No, I would target middle- and lower-income people. Studies show that these groups of people are saving at record low levels, about 3%, and would tend to spend an extra income and their spending would create jobs."

You see, it's quite clear. If you give a tax cut to the middle class and those below, they would be spending; but if you give a tax cut, two third of which goes to your rich pals, privileged Canadians with a whole lot of bucks in their pockets, it's not going to help with jobs.

**Mr Klees:** How many bucks have you got in your pocket?

**Mr Marchese:** The member for York-Mackenzie has more bucks in his pocket than I do in mine. I know that. Everybody knows that. You've got more bucks in your pocket than I will have in a lifetime. So do the friends you are supporting through this income tax cut.

But this is quite clear. This economist is telling you, telling us, those who are watching this program at this ungodly hour, that these income tax cuts are not designed to create jobs. They're an ideological tool. It helps your friends. It reduces the level of government and reduces the expectations people have of government and it's a fact. We believe on this side that it is a fact and that you're just playing a game, my friends, and you play that game so very, very well.

The propaganda machine you people have and the bucks you're using that are at your disposal, at the state's disposal, at the government's disposal, our money, the people's money to propagandize about how great this is for jobs, it's all trickery. It dissembles, it's deceitful and it doesn't help one single person to borrow \$22 billion at the expense of so much.

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I hate to interrupt the eloquence, but I think the honourable

member's reference to deceitfulness on the part of this government is out of order and I would ask that he withdraw that, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for York-Mackenzie, I've been listening carefully and I did not hear that word used. If the member did use that word, I would then ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr Marchese:** I will withdraw that, Madam Speaker.

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I am absolutely overwhelmed by the honesty of the honourable member and I want to express my admiration for him.

2330

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. I'm sure he appreciates it, however.

**Mr Marchese:** I do appreciate the admiration, no doubt about that. I am happy to have fans on the other side. There's no doubt that I appreciate it.

But \$22 billion to achieve what goal? At what expense? And what consequences fall from this tax cut? That's the point we're arguing here. At what social expense to do this? In my view it is a highly irresponsible act by any government, but particularly this one, that is implementing it.

Just look at the various things they've had to do in order to satisfy the greed of that particular income tax cut because you've got to feed it. How do you people feed that income tax cut? You feed it by cutting in other areas. Where have you started doing that?

Just the other day we were looking at the figures in the wage protection act, something the New Democratic Party brought into this province to support workers who through no fault of their own are laid off when a company decides for whatever reason that it is no longer in existence here in this province. They want to take off somewhere; they go broke. You know who the greedy people are in line for that kind of money? It's the banks. The banks are the first in line to collect whatever money is remaining. You know who is at the end of the line? It's the workers who worked in that particular place.

It's not just that worker who is affected by that loss, it's the family that is affected by it, it's the children of that particular family who are affected by it, the very children these people talk about, that they care about.

I know some of these people over here don't really care much about these children, because you've got to look at the actions. So \$200 million went to working people as a result of that wage protection act, \$200 million that this government says is too rich: "We can't afford it. It's okay for the banks to be first in line, but it's not okay for workers, because we can't afford it." Imagine people who, through no fault of their own, are out on the streets —

**Mr Kormos:** Victims.

**Mr Marchese:** — victims of an employer who decides for whatever reason that they're gone. This government is proud. That's why I referred to the cesspool of arrogance on the other side, because it is. The septic tank is in this place. It's true, \$200 million from the wage protection fund is gone.

Look at the seniors, what they've done there. I call this a user fee. These guys call them copayments, as if to somehow suggest euphemistically that it's not a user fee.



But they've gone to the seniors. They put a \$100 fee for those earning \$16,000, a combined income of two people. It's not a whole lot. My mother makes ten thousand measly dollars, but if you earn \$16,000, these guys over here charge you a \$100 fee and then for every prescription the pharmacy charges \$6.50. For those not earning \$16,000, earning \$10,000, like my mother, they've got to pay a prescription fee every time they go and fill that prescription.

They're proud as they whack vulnerable people, in this particular case seniors. Are you proud to beat up on seniors? Are you proud to say you're bringing down the deficit as you allow seniors to incur new costs, seniors who have gone through the working world, have done their part, and then you take from them at a time when they need your support? You laugh and you're smug and you're proud that you're bringing down the deficit.

Look at the family support plan. The member for Welland-Thorold knows about that plan; he was there. He and another colleague from Sudbury East were there; they caught it on camera. The Frankenstein of this new system says: "It's okay. No, it's fixed. There's no problem here." The Frankenstein of the new system, who broke it, says, "There's no problem here." But they ruined a whole lot of people.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** Who would that be?

**Mr Marchese:** The Attorney General, your buddy. Madam Speaker, you would understand, because you had a lot of letters in your riding too from people who depended on that money to flow through, as it did under our government. But the Frankensteins over there decided to change the plan. This is the cost of the income tax cut.

There is a litany of hurts against people who are very vulnerable: the seniors we mentioned, people who lose their jobs because the company goes broke; then we go to the family plan, people who were expecting that money to be able to survive. It wasn't there any more because the Attorney General decided to lay off a whole lot of offices and a whole lot of people as a result of that incompetence, which is reflected clearly in the incompetence of the government generally, because they're cutting all over the place. Some of these things are not working any more effectively, so they have to continue to propagandize by saying: "Everything is okay. Everything is working fine." It's not working fine.

Look at what the Minister of Labour is doing to injured workers. There's a litany of assaults and the tax against vulnerable people here. The government says, "In the workers' compensation plan we've got an unfunded liability that's too high," so what does the minister do? I'll tell you. She says: "You employers, you fine people, you've been paying too much, so we're going to give you another break. We're going to give you a \$6-billion break." Whom are we going to whack? Whom are we going to beat up to make that \$6-billion cut we give to the employers? We beat up on the injured workers who, through no fault of their own, men and women, get injured on the job, people who work hard in those factories, in construction, home workers, on the farms, wherever they are, who work hard for a living. This government has decided to cut their benefits from 95% of net to 85% of net, and they're proud.

They beat up on people, they whack them over the head with a serious cane and then they say, "We're reducing the deficit." Who are we doing this for? For our kids. They're doing this for our kids. They take \$22 billion, borrow to finance a tax cut that goes 60% to their rich buddies, and beat up on so many friends.

My friend from Huron shakes her head in disagreement. We know that Mr Murdoch from Grey-Owen Sound disagrees with this assessment. He says he's heard it all before. He may have heard it all before, but the public needs to hear it over and over again, and we speak not to you people who are here, because you people don't listen. We speak, when we make our speeches here, not to you, but through you to the public that's watching. It's not for you that this speech is made. We know you fine "honourables" over there don't have any sense of what it means to be an injured worker, because you've got the bucks in your pocket and you're passing the big bucks to your friends.

You don't know what it means to be an injured worker and to receive 85% of net instead of 90%. You don't know what it means for a company to go bankrupt and to be the last person in line to receive any dough because the banks are at the front of the line, your friends. You don't know what it's like to be part of a family plan that was working, and you decided through your Frankenstein minister to change the plan. You don't know what it's like. We're not talking to you; we're talking to the people who are watching these debates.

They increased tuition fees. My daughter was in first year university, paying close to \$4,000. When you add on the tuition fees, including the expenses —

**Mr Conway:** You have a daughter?  
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**Mr Marchese:** Is there some doubt? She's 21 years old, at U of T — close to \$4,000. Do you know what that means, \$4,000? These people proudly talk about getting a handle on the deficit. At whose expense? At the expense of young people and families who cannot afford to pay that kind of tuition fee. They gloat. That's why I call it a cesspool of arrogance when I speak of this — oozing out of these areas, oozing out of these members. Tuition fees at galloping rates, galloping every year, and these people on the other side are proud. At whose expense? This income tax cut, at whose expense?

They talk about education, as if they haven't hurt them enough. I tell you, Speaker, and the people watching, the education cuts are yet to come. But these guys talk about, "Finally, we've got a curriculum that's going to be tough." Tough, my foot. There's nothing there. It's trickery, that's what it is. All it means is that guys can go around, with their minister of course, claiming that all of a sudden they've found the answer: They're going to be tough, and finally kids will be able to read.

But if you look at the comparison of the document we produced versus the document these people produced, probably written by one of the PR people at the back there, some of these young people, it's all a propaganda machine. There's no content in that. What there is in that document —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** I say to the member for Niagara South, who is challenging me in this regard, read that document



and then come to me in your two-minute rebuttal at some point or in some other speech and show me how you believe the content varies from the bill we had before. Show me that, rather than the propaganda that you and the member for Huron and the others speak about.

**Mr Kormos:** Spew.

**Mr Marchese:** Spew about; not speak about but spew about.

We have in my riding the Niagara community health centre. Under our government, we were lucky to be able to bring three or four community centres under one roof, the Alexandra Park community health centre and the Niagara one and others, because these people are dealing with community health. These are the groups that deal with the most vulnerable people: poor people, homeless, people who don't have a place to go. Do you know what this government did? It cut their budget by 10%.

Look at the health cuts in general. Speaker, I know you must have been in a hospital in the last year or so. We know countless people who have been in hospitals these days who are unable to find the kind of treatment they were used to getting from the workers in that place, the nurses. The nurses are disappearing. They're disappearing, because you people are firing them, you people are letting them go. As you amalgamate these hospitals, as you close these hospitals, up to 10,000 of these nurses are disappearing. As they disappear, the quality of life disappears in those hospitals and in Ontario.

This income tax cut is devastating our social structures in Ontario, is devastating to our humanity. We are losing the face of our humanity. With that single act, that income tax cut, \$22 billion you've got to pay, you are tearing asunder the social structures of Ontario. What you people are doing is irretrievable. I tell the people who are watching, what these people are doing we cannot repair, no matter who gets into power. That's why you, as you're watching, need to meet with these people and fight with these people, argue with them, because there is always time to change the direction of this destruction.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Hudak:** I'm pleased to rise. I'm surprised the member opposite was defending The Common Curriculum, the document lambasted by parents all across Ontario since you brought it out, the warm, fuzzy document that talked about outcomes instead of measurable standards and said that maybe some time in grade 3 students should know what a verb looks like — I don't know if they can use it; they should understand what math is, they should have some concept of what adding is, but can they multiply, can they divide? It made them feel good. The drive was esteem: to make sure the students felt good about themselves.

That's all well and good, but when they got out of school after going through your curriculum, not really knowing as much as they should, would they feel good when they went to look for a job and couldn't find a job because they didn't have the skills, because of your Common Curriculum? They'd feel real good sitting at home watching television, looking out the window, wondering what happened to their misspent youth because they didn't have good standards through school.

When our students graduate, they will have a standard they can follow with the parents so they can see what a student should learn through each grade. He asked me for some examples. Now, believe it or not, we are going to ask students in Ontario to know how to write in complete sentences with punctuation by the end of grade 1. What a revolution. What a remarkable concept. You didn't even give any specifications of what you wanted in grade 1; we're asking students to write in sentences with punctuation by grade 1. It used to be that students in grade 8 would have to convert fractions into decimals. Now we're saying that students in grade 6 should be able to perform that simple mathematical task.

The Common Curriculum was a joke. The joke went something like this: A lumberjack went into a forest and cut down 10 trees an hour for 12 hours and he got paid 10 bucks an hour. It used to be, "What's the answer to that?" The Common Curriculum said: "If the lumberjack goes in, 10 hours, 12 trees an hour, how do the birds and the squirrels feel about that?" That's what The Common Curriculum was all about. We're changing that.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I enjoyed very much the speech of the previous member who spoke on behalf of the New Democratic Party. I always thought that all the experts on education we have on the other side who give their speeches at the Rotary Club and tell the people the way education should be should be required to spend about two months in a classroom in an inner-city school and see the challenges they must face and then see whether they have the same opinion as before they went in. I suspect it might be just a little different view. It's probably the same with any job, if you have to do that.

I'm glad the member mentioned in his speech the consequences of the tax cut. He has obviously made comment on the fact that some of the bond rating agencies have said that to meet its budgetary requirements this government is going to have to cut even deeper if it's going to proceed with its tax cut. Where have you heard that before? You've heard that from this side of the House. You've heard that from independent, outside people. Economists, even those of a small-c conservative nature, have said to you, "If you decide you're going to cut taxes and cut government expenditures at the same time, it will have a contractionary effect, not an expansionary effect." Second, they said it will delay the date at which you reach a balanced budget. That means you're going to accumulate more debt.

I know debt has already been accumulated, but if balancing the budget is very important, surely you wouldn't want to take longer to do so, therefore building up more accumulated debt. You will have accumulated \$20 billion more in accumulated debt over the period of your mandate; not all your fault, but you would have responsibility for some of it, because you decided to embark upon a tax cut before you balanced the budget.

**Mr Kormos:** The problem here is that this government has some sort of fantasy, some sort of obsession with what they think of as the good old days. The good old days, when only the children of rich families could dare think of going to post-secondary education; the good old days they're trying to emulate with their tuition fee



increases and this remarkable deal with the University of Western Ontario. They just struck a deal with this government to permit them to charge full-fee, American-style tuitions, tuitions of \$18,000 a year for the two-year MBA program at the University of Western Ontario, tuition alone of \$18,000 a year. That, in the mind of this government — which is something of an oxymoron in itself — is the good old days, when only the wealthiest could attend post-secondary school.

There's the prospect of creating a two-tier health care system, where people like seniors, be it Mrs Marchese or people like Stella Motolanez down on Riverside Drive in Welland, are whacked with user fees, notwithstanding that they're struggling on modest pensioners' incomes. This government likes to say it hasn't created new taxes. It's created one heck of a lot of new user fees, and user fees are taxes. Taxes might as well be user fees.

This government has downloaded thousands and then millions of dollars on to the backs of property taxpayers; large numbers of them seniors on fixed incomes, incomes that are diminishing regularly as a result of the policies of this government; large numbers of them young families headed by, yes, those young adults under 25 for whom unemployment is double the level that it is for the general population in this province. Unemployment in the Niagara region alone is 10.9% and, as I say, double that when you talk about people under 25.

It's little solace for the unemployed to hear about a few part-time, low-wage, temporary jobs that this government has nothing to do with when this government's policies persist in creating a downward spiral of growing poverty and despair for women and men, their parents and their kids across this province.

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**Mr Klees:** Unfortunately, we in this place can't change the channel the way the people at home can, so we're forced to listen to this. It's not surprising that the members here continue with the rhetoric about how the initiatives of this government aren't working.

The reality is that it's the people in this province who overwhelmingly support what we are doing. I can speak from personal experience. People in my riding, people I'm in touch with on a daily basis, tell us that it is working, that the tax cuts are encouraging economic activity. The people in my riding are telling me that a government that finally has the courage to do the things that other governments have not had the courage to do in the past are giving them an incentive once again to invest in their businesses, which in turn creates real jobs.

That is what this budget was all about. It's about handing the province back to the people of Ontario. It means that once again there is confidence in the marketplace. When you take a look at the reality of our society, it means that once again people have hope. They have hope because they can see that they have a government in this province that is doing the things that make economic sense. Houses are being sold, jobs are being created, manufacturing is on the increase. I can tell you this has everything to do with a government that has introduced a budget that makes good common sense for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Fort York has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Marchese:** I thank all my friends who have spoken in support of the comments I have made.

**Mr Kormos:** I'm not sure all of them were your friends.

**Mr Marchese:** The ones who spoke in support, obviously; the others weren't my friends, clearly.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** I know you're my friend too, Frank. I accept this. It's all right.

To the member for Niagara South, not to be too unkind to him, because it's unfair to be too impolite, he doesn't know what he's talking about. The member for St Catharines, as a former teacher, understands. That's why he made the comments he did. When the member for Niagara South talks about the feel-good curriculum, that's the feel-good curriculum you people are imposing now on all children. That's the propaganda you people are imposing on all of Ontario. It's nothing short of propaganda.

Our Common Curriculum was something that most people supported, except you conservative types, and there are a number of them: the phonics group, the ones who want to get tough with kids, testing them. We were instituting testing. We began that, so we don't disagree, and that was part of The Common Curriculum. It was all part of it. But your member for Niagara South called it a feel-good curriculum. It's not true, it is simply not true. I'll say no more to that except that I don't think he's up to date on these matters.

As it relates to the income tax cut, again I'll refer you to the economist, Mr Donner, who says: "I believe the tax cutting solutions being proposed and implemented today are basically ideologically driven. They are not designed to create jobs, although they are sold that way to the public. The tax cuts are ultimately for the purpose of eroding the role of government and the expectations people have of government," and that's what this government is all about. We speak to the hope that those who are watching are going to continue fighting the policies of this ideological government.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It is my pleasure to address in the public interest what really should be called the Tory Incompetence Act. After this second attempt at a budget, we have exposed the fact that not only was this government put in place with a Comic Book Revolution, with 21 pages and pictures, but when it comes to doing the tough job of actually trying to figure out how to do things, this government has come up flawed time after time.

**Mr Murdoch:** Lucky we had the pictures, eh? That way you can understand it.

**Mr Kennedy:** I hear my honourable colleague from Huron-Bruce talking about —

**Mr Murdoch:** Grey-Owen Sound; get it right.

**Mr Kennedy:** His hospitals have been cut, this year and last, 12% and are prepared to be cut even more because of the irrelevant tax cut this government would rather deliver.

Across sit a number of members of a government that would rather impose a tax on seniors' drugs, in fact enjoy



doing that so much they imposed the same tax twice in an eight-and-a-half-month period; hit seniors all across the province. It took 71 days. Not one of those members rose in this House in defence of seniors, not one, to tell this government it did wrong. Finally, under the encouragement of our caucus and seniors all across the province, this government caved in. Even they, even this government that knows no shame, couldn't help but not punish seniors a second time. God knows, they've punished them enough.

Increased long-term-care fees in hospitals, something else this government feels good about, made it easy to charge frail seniors waiting for long-term-care facilities, laying in hospital beds. They're now being charged \$40 a day, thanks to the changes made by this government that just can't shoot straight.

That is the same government that tells us today they're going to increase fines for liquor offences. Why are they going to do that? Because they think it's going to make up for the liquor inspectors who are going to have to be inspecting gambling facilities all across the province in their new liquor and gambling corporation. Courtesy of this spineless government, unable to come to terms with the fiscal realities on their own and trying to raise three times as much revenue from gambling, we're going to have video gambling machines in every bar and every restaurant across the province. The same inspectors who

can't now keep minors out of bars are going to be used to keep minors from gambling. We see rife in this bill, in part III, the hypocrisy of a government that would stoop to depend on gambling revenue because they can't manage the government.

We see that video gambling machines are the unique innovation of this government. In the United States 43 states won't take them, British Columbia won't take them, but they're good enough for Mike Harris, because Mike Harris doesn't have the gumption to put together a properly run government.

What do we see here today? We see a government that prides itself on running things. It's got in this bill that all the trust companies in the province go out of business if it doesn't get passed. We have a government that has put off, as it so often has, its important initiatives and tries to foist that on to the pleasure of the opposition. As you found out today, those bully tactics have a limit. You guys don't own this place; you're just renting, and the lease is running out.

Also contained in this bill is a change in the Securities Act. Finally they stop soaking —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. It being almost 12 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 am.

*The House adjourned at 2400.*



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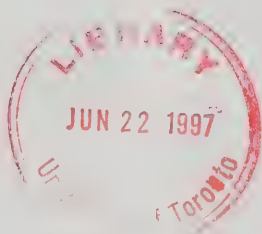
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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

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Thursday 19 June 1997

Jeudi 19 juin 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 juin 1997

*The House met at 1003.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### WASTE DISPOSAL ON NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I move that in the opinion of this House, spent limestone quarries within (a) the Niagara Escarpment planning area of the Niagara Escarpment plan as defined in the Niagara Escarpment and Planning Act, or (b) an area that is within a five-kilometre radius adjacent to the said Niagara Escarpment planning area, are not suitable locations for solid waste disposal landfill sites.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Skarica:** As I'm sure you're well aware, there are a number of spent limestone quarries on or near the Niagara Escarpment planning area of the Niagara Escarpment plan. The current law is that spent quarries on the Niagara Escarpment planning area cannot be used as landfills. That came as a result of a private member's bill brought by the New Democratic Party member Mr Duignan in 1993, and it was given royal assent in 1994.

I have the debates surrounding that act, and basically it was conceded by all the members of all the parties that if you were to preserve the Niagara Escarpment and if you were serious about having it continue forever as a UN-designated biosphere reserve, you couldn't put landfills on it.

The current law, however, allows the spent quarries that border the Niagara Escarpment planning area to be used as landfills and, in my opinion, that is an anomaly in our law. Very often, the spent quarries that border the Niagara Escarpment area are still part of the Niagara Escarpment. They're just as much a part of the Niagara Escarpment as areas within the Niagara Escarpment planning area.

Most, if not all, of the spent quarries bordering the planning area suffer from the same fragile conditions as the quarries within the planning area. It was those fragile conditions that led to the passing of Mr Duignan's private member's bill.

Further, water and air streams travelling from spent quarries bordering the Niagara Escarpment planning area often flow on to the land, water and air within the planning area. An example would be the proposed but now denied Redland proposal in Wentworth North. Both water and air flowing over the Redland site spill directly on to the bordering Niagara Escarpment planning area.

Common sense dictates, therefore, that landfills just outside the planning area would contaminate the escarpment within the planning area with the same amount of devastating force and effect as if the landfill were in fact physically located within the planning area.

Spent limestone quarries both within and without the Niagara Escarpment planning area have two essential features which render them unsuitable as landfills: (1) any natural buffers have been removed by quarrying; and (2) the remaining bedrock consists of fractured limestone, a geologic feature which makes it virtually impossible to predict where and how quickly leachate contaminants are spreading out from landfill sites.

Golder Associates Ltd, experts in the field of hydrology, had this to say in a report to the Wellington county and city of Guelph council on a proposed dump that was being suggested in Wellington county. The report is dated June 1991, and it had this to say about fractured bedrock areas that could have proposed dumps on them:

"Contaminant migration within these aquifers would pose a significant risk to the groundwater resource. The hydrogeologic characterization of fractured rock, necessary to implement an acceptable monitoring program, to predict contaminant arrival times and to implement remedial contingency measures if warranted, cannot be accomplished to the same level of confidence as for porous media (sand, gravel, silt or clay). Therefore, the siting of a landfill in an area that potentially could result in contaminant migration in fractured rock is considered unacceptable."

The Ministry of Environment experience has been that this is true. The Ministry of Environment has guidelines that indicate that certain hydrogeological settings, such as upland gravel areas and areas of near-surface fractured rocks, are less amenable to landfilling than others.

Accordingly, in May 1988 the Ministry of Environment adopted policy 14-15, which states in part, "It is the ministry's position that there are limitations to engineered facilities and it prefers sites in environments with characteristics that provide a high degree of natural protection (eg, thick clay deposits)." Spent fractured limestone quarries provide no natural protection of any kind.

The Toronto Star indicates — and you know the truth is forthcoming when a Conservative member relies on the Toronto Star — in an article on August 11, 1994, dealing with the proposed dumps in limestone quarries in Maple, that people have no faith that clay liners won't leak. They say, "That view is supported by experts in hydrogeology who say landfills should be located on clay soils."

1010

I have with me a number of reports, articles and judgements which point out numerous problems with using spent quarries on landfill sites even if liners and



other modern engineering technologies are used. Proponents of engineering and liners often say that with the technology we have today the quarry will be tight as a drum and the public is safe. That in fact is not the truth. In the short time I have I'd like to point out some of the potential problems that no engineering can deal with.

There's always the danger of pop-ups with limestone quarries. Pop-ups occur when bedrock layers buckle upwards to relieve stress. Documented case records with the NEC indicate that limestone quarries in southern Ontario are prone to floor heave. A pop-up would severely damage any engineered liner and a Pandora's box of contamination would leak into the fractured limestone and proceed in unpredictable directions. The only certainty would be an ecological disaster.

The life of contamination in landfills is considerable. The life of any engineered site producing leachate would be hundreds of years, according to the hearings that have been heard on proposed sites. In the proposed Steetley dump in my riding, the pumping of leachate and water containing any escaped contamination would have to be maintained and continued for 300 years. It is hard to imagine any system working that smoothly for that long. A failure for only a short time would unleash severe ecological damage.

Scant attention has been paid to the possibility of earthquakes. Recently, major geological faults have been discovered in Ontario's bedrock. Over a 300-year period it is safe to say that quakes of any magnitude could occur. A major geological fault lies deep in the bedrock just directly underneath the proposed Steetley dump in my riding. A significant shifting of this fault could severely damage any engineered site and let loose countless tons of contaminants on an area with no natural defences.

The unfortunate reality, as well, according to the experts, is that all dumps eventually leak.

The Toronto Star in an article dated July 14, 1994, reviewing the proposed Oak Ridges dump in the city of Vaughan, detailed a report that was prepared for the city of Vaughan. What was being suggested there was a dump liner which would contain three layers of compacted clay. Experts examining the proposal indicated as follows: "Landfill will start leaking contaminants into the ground-water within a decade," notwithstanding the clay liner.

So far I've discussed only water contamination. There's another contamination all dumps have and that is air contamination. Rather than refer to experts or predicted causes of failure, I'd like to refer to an actual dump that exists in an abandoned quarry in Montreal. I'm referring to an Ottawa Citizen report dated November 22, 1994. The third-largest dump in North America is in Montreal and it's called the Miron dump. "The Miron dump is a hole in the heart of a residential neighbourhood at the north end of the city.... Hundreds of people live around its perimeter.... As many as 70,000 people live in the area."

That's not terribly different from the situation here in Ontario where millions of people live very close to the Niagara Escarpment, if not on it.

The biggest problem there is that gases rise from the decomposing waste. According to the residents there, the stench is nauseating and residents worry about the effect

the gases are having on their health. A resident indicates as follows: "The smell can be bad and there are a lot of animals, rats and raccoons."

"A visit to the 250-hectare site is like sinking into another world," according to the report. "Hundreds of gulls circle among the trucks. Roads wind down around the garbage.... A series of black pipes have been sunk through the layers of trash to collect biogas.... The dump produces an estimated 500,000 cubic metres of biogas a day." It is burned off.

Preliminary research that is now being conducted indicates there is cause for concern for the health of the surrounding residents. "The area has 20% more low-weight births than normal and a significantly higher incidence of liver and prostate cancer in men."

In conclusion, I would suggest that if this resolution is not approved, the not-so-pretty picture in Montreal may be the future of the Niagara Escarpment. Landfills have no place in a UN-designated biosphere reserve. That's our law already. Contaminated air and water don't respect manmade designations or planning areas. If we're serious about preserving the Niagara Escarpment, I suggest the House adopt this resolution.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I am pleased the member has brought this matter for consideration of this House because it allows us to focus on the importance of the Niagara Escarpment as a biosphere reserve. Its designation by the United Nations in my view was a major event here in Ontario.

My concern is that the new administration is taking a different view of the Niagara Escarpment and the need to protect it than the view that was expressed by the previous NDP and Liberal governments and the previous Conservative government of William Davis.

You will remember that the present Minister of Environment and Energy, Norm Sterling, was responsible back in the 1980s for bringing forward a plan for the Niagara Escarpment territory. He was very proud of that and justifiably so. He was then the Provincial Secretary for Resources Development, a cabinet post that was known in those days and does not exist at present.

My great concern is that we now have the Niagara Escarpment taken away from a person who had an interest in protecting it — the Minister of Environment and Energy, Norm Sterling, a person who had a personal commitment to the Niagara Escarpment — and placed in the hands of the Ministry of Natural Resources. Some people refer to it in the environmental field as the ministry of exploitation of natural resources, because many people within the natural resources ministry see their clients as those who exploit those resources, rather than preserve those resources. That was a major step backwards, to have the Ontario government take away responsibility for the Niagara Escarpment from the Ministry of Environment and place it under the jurisdiction of the natural resources ministry.

You can already see the difference in the appointments that have taken place. There are now people who have been placed on the Niagara Escarpment Commission who have openly opposed the Niagara Escarpment plan and the activities of the commission. There may even be people who have an amendment application before the



Niagara Escarpment Commission to remove the land they live on from the jurisdiction of the Niagara Escarpment Commission. This is information which has come to me. I believe that when you see the appointments that are made, good people as they might be in many fields, not everybody who is on the escarpment commission now may be dedicated to its preservation, and that indeed is a major step backwards.

We have now, as the member would know, new information about landfills and the member has shared that with those of us in the House today. Years ago the same kind of information, the same kind of experience, wasn't available. Today that information is available and he has shared it with the House and has expressed justifiable concerns about the future as it relates to potential landfills on the Niagara Escarpment lands, on quarry lands.

The United Nations did not easily recognize this as a biosphere reserve. They looked carefully at the land and then they saw it as a genuine asset for Ontario. It is, I would say, an environmental gem, and yet if we see the development that I hear some people want to see on it, we will have the Escarpment Hilton, the Escarpment Howard Johnson's, the Escarpment Holiday Inn, the Sheraton Escarpment. We'll have golf courses, we'll have all kinds of active recreational uses, instead of reserving it for passive recreational uses.

The Bruce Trail Association just had a gathering in Niagara Falls — I think it was in Queenston — on the weekend. The Minister of Natural Resources was in attendance. There is a group which has tried to preserve the escarpment.

As you drive past it, as you see it from highways and secondary roads in the province, it is a genuine asset. If you want to go and look at development from wall to wall, just go to Cleveland and drive in the outskirts of Cleveland and you'll see that. I don't think that attracts anybody in terms of tourism. I don't think that produces any kind of interest in terms of the natural environment.

But when you drive along the escarpment, we have preserved that in Ontario, governments of three different political stripes — we now have a government of a fourth political stripe — who have preserved it. Surely the Reform party in power now in Ontario would want to preserve it as well so it becomes truly ecumenical. This is an area which all of us can enjoy.

1020

But there are people who are outright opponents of the Niagara Escarpment plan, who themselves have been rallying against the Niagara Escarpment for reasons they believe to be legitimate, who are now placed on the Niagara Escarpment Commission and are able to make decisions related to potential development on the escarpment lands. This would be a substantial step backward. What is so important about it — the member knows when he talks about landfills — is that once you make that decision to develop or once you make that decision to place a landfill on this land — it's been done before — you can't reverse that decision; the decision is made for good.

That certainly would be detrimental to the tourism in our province, to the acceptance and enjoyment of the natural passive terrain in this province, and would cer-

tainly be a major step backward in terms of the designation as a biosphere reserve by the United Nations.

I want to commend the member for bringing forward this particular motion at this time. It really means we have to move forward even more aggressively with reduction and reuse and recycling so that we severely reduce the amount of garbage produced by our society that would have to go into some kind of disposal, either landfill or another kind of disposal. If we are to take that aggressive action to reduce, to recycle and reuse items, we would find we wouldn't have the same need for landfill sites.

I certainly want to commend the member. This allows us to talk about an important part of the natural history and the natural setting of Ontario, the Niagara Escarpment, which I believe should be preserved for all time. This government has a chance to do it rather than to allow it to be exploited for other purposes.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I want to commend the member for Wentworth North for bringing this matter before the House. As he said, we have an international treasure in the Niagara Escarpment which has been recognized by the United Nations as an international biosphere reserve.

As he indicated, this resolution is an extension of the private member's bill which was passed under the previous government, sponsored by the then member for Halton North, Noel Duignan. He brought forward a bill which would prohibit the use of spent limestone quarries in the Niagara Escarpment planning area for landfill because of all the kinds of concerns the member for Wentworth North has raised. The fissures in the rock make it impossible to predict where leachate might go, so this is a very serious problem.

For that reason, many members on all sides of the House supported the former member for Halton North's bill when it was brought forward to the House. It was one of those few private members' bills that actually was passed into law. Of course, we then had a government that was willing to allow private members' bills to move beyond second reading if they passed and was willing to allow them to go through the process and to be passed at third reading into law. This government of course does not allow that to happen.

The member for Wentworth North has extended the issue with this resolution, in saying that landfills should not be allowed in spent limestone quarries within a five-kilometre radius of the Niagara Escarpment planning area. Some might say this could be quite controversial, and I know the member for Wentworth North realizes this could indeed raise a good deal of controversy in the area.

As the member for St Catharines indicated, we all should be ensuring that as much as possible, the three Rs should be used to avoid materials going into landfill. But there will always have to be some sort of disposal, and what the member for Wentworth North is saying is that it should not be in these kinds of rock formations that could contaminate the surrounding area and contaminate the international biosphere reserve, the Niagara Escarpment.



I want to express some serious concern about the protection of the escarpment. This is something that I, as Minister of Environment and Energy, like my predecessors in the environmental portfolio, was very concerned about.

We now have a situation where the responsibility for the protection of the escarpment as an international biosphere reserve has been transferred from the Ministry of Environment to the Ministry of Natural Resources. I submit to you that the Ministry of Natural Resources, of which I was also previously minister, has a conflict of interest in this matter, because the Minister of Natural Resources is also responsible for finding quarry sites. The Minister of Natural Resources is responsible for ensuring that we can find gravel in this province and that we are able to develop aggregate resources in this province.

You now have one part of the ministry responsible for finding gravel pits and quarries and exploiting them and providing that resource to the province, and another part of the same ministry responsible for the Niagara Escarpment, one of the areas that many quarry operators look at and say, "This is where we're going to get our resource." It's a conflict of interest.

The fact that this government has transferred the responsibility for the escarpment from the Ministry of Environment to the Ministry of Natural Resources unfortunately is an indication that this government is not interested in protecting the escarpment and preserving the escarpment but is more interested in developing and exploiting the resource, the quarrying, in the escarpment. That would be disastrous for the international biosphere reserve.

I think this is demonstrated by the appointments this government has made to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Just recently — I know this is hard to believe — they've appointed a person who a year ago was arguing that the escarpment commission should be eliminated, that this kind of protection shouldn't be provided, that his own land, his property, currently within the Niagara Escarpment planning area, should be removed from the Niagara Escarpment planning area, because he didn't believe it should have these kinds of restrictions. This individual has now been appointed by the cabinet to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, someone who doesn't believe we should have a Niagara Escarpment Commission.

I think this is an example of how this government is not interested in protecting the Niagara Escarpment, and it's a tragedy. I commend the member for Wentworth North for bringing this matter forward. I hope his resolution will be passed, and I hope that if it is passed by the majority in this assembly, the government will have that as an indication that all members in this House value this important resource and want it protected and believe it should be under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** While I recognize that the intentions of the member for Wentworth North are certainly good and his concerns for the environment are admirable, I believe that if this motion were to be passed it would essentially be duplicating what we already have as existing legislation.

As mentioned a little earlier, in 1994 the previous government did pass Bill 62, with unanimous consent from all parties in the House at that time. It resulted in amendments to the Environmental Protection Act, commonly referred to as the EPA, that essentially prohibit the establishment of landfill sites in the Niagara Escarpment planning area. At the same time, the Niagara Escarpment plan was amended to exclude new waste disposal facilities from the planning area.

I think it's important to note that after Bill 62 was passed, a developer who had been planning a landfill site in the Acton area took the ministry to court challenging this exclusion. The ministry won the case, which means the protection of this area has already been tested and proven valid. As well, under the Environmental Assessment Act, every significant plan for landfill sites anywhere in the province, absolutely anywhere, must meet the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act. **1030**

I'm very proud of the updated act, through Bill 76 that recently passed. We've had many very positive comments about Bill 76, from the environmentalists as well as from municipalities. In that bill we've enshrined public consultation, which was not in the act previously. It's enshrined for the public in the design as well as in the process of working through environmental assessment. With this bill we have a transparent exercise that people can at least understand what's expected of them; the requirements are really up front and they know where it's at.

What's really important about that bill and the change in the Environmental Assessment Act is that we get faster to a yes where it's environmentally sound, and we get faster to a no where it is not environmentally sound. I see the critic laughing. She well remembers working through that particular bill.

Environmental assessment is indeed a decision-making process used to promote good environmental planning. It assesses the potential effects of defined activities on the environment. Its purpose is to provide for the protection, conservation and wise management of Ontario's environment. The Environmental Assessment Act is a very precise piece of legislation that requires a comprehensive review of the social, environmental and economic issues. If there are good reasons why a site should not be approved, they will certainly come out during this assessment process. This government is committed to ensuring that Ontario's high standards of environmental protection are maintained, and wherever possible, improved upon.

I'd remind the members opposite that recently the International Wildlife Foundation upgraded our rating in Ontario from an F when the previous NDP government was there, based on its activities, to a C, and that certainly relates to the activities of the Minister of Natural Resources.

The fact is, the protection this motion is seeking is already provided for under both acts. For the reasons I have given, I cannot support the motion before the House today. The resolution is unnecessary, in that mechanisms already exist to provide the protection for special areas such as the Niagara Escarpment as well as for the rest of the province.



We must continue to use existing legislation and the environmental assessment processes that are already in place and make sure they are applied consistently and equally across this province. I have great faith that the Minister of Natural Resources will look after the Niagara Escarpment, and our Minister of Environment and Energy is very genuine and genuinely concerned and is indeed very effectively looking after the environment of this province.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I rise in support of the resolution from my colleague from Wentworth North. I first of all want to commend the member for his continuous efforts to represent his constituents. It's refreshing to see members on the government side of the House actually step out of the propaganda machine of this government and decide they're going to speak on behalf of the people who have elected them. It's an example that many members on the government side of the House should look at very carefully and follow, if for no other reason than because, when the next election rolls around, Mike Harris's coattails may not stretch into your riding. Your constituents are going to judge you on what you've done in your riding and how often you have spoken out on their behalf rather than on behalf of your government. Clearly you should take the example of the member for Wentworth North and follow his lead for your own political survival.

On this particular issue, though, the member speaks to a concern that is real. The member speaks to a concern that affects his own riding, affects many of us who represent areas along the escarpment. There was a protracted battle in that particular area over a site that would have been excluded through this resolution. This resolution is even more important today, in view of everything else this government has done in regard to the escarpment. Very clearly, this government has taken the Niagara Escarpment from a ministry of protection to one of development.

I was interested in hearing the member for Northumberland basically be the apologist for the government today on its regressive policy of turning over the Niagara Escarpment to the development industry, basically putting up a For Sale sign on the Niagara Escarpment and saying: "Folks, it's open season. We're going to sell it to the highest bidder. We're going to allow you to do whatever you want."

They have taken the responsibility for the escarpment from a minister who — although I disagree with many of the decisions this government has made in regard to the environment, I certainly believe that Mr Sterling, the Minister of Environment, was fully committed and dedicated to protecting the Niagara Escarpment. You had a minister there who understands the need for government to protect this beauty we have, and what does this government do? It takes that responsibility away from that minister and gives it to a minister who couldn't care less about the Niagara Escarpment and has been an advocate of more development on the escarpment.

It's extremely important for us to realize that there's a long-term impact to what we're doing here, that this is not something that's only going to affect us today or tomorrow or next week. When you look at the directions

of this government, this motion today is even more important. It gives us a very clear message. It says to the government, it says to the private sector, "We believe this must be protected." The five-kilometre radius makes a great deal of sense, because it allows the distances necessary so you don't get the runoffs, don't get the damage, don't get the impact of a landfill site to affect an area such as the Niagara Escarpment. It's an extremely important signal to send out.

It's a signal that's even more important today, in view of some of the changes I've talked about and in view of some of the appointments this government has made. There are seven openings on the escarpment commission. The appointments that have been made generally — and there are some good people there — tend to a pro-development type of commission. The commission now, instead of looking at trying to protect the escarpment, is going to be more concerned about trying to fast-track developments around the escarpment. This resolution today I think is going to counter some of that.

I hope the people who don't represent areas of the province directly impacted by this really understand what this is all about, really understand that it's not simply another piece of land we can give away, or that we can let someone borrow for 20 or 30 or 50 or 100 years and develop on it and then hope they give it back to us in the shape we gave it to them in, because that's not the case. Once you start destroying what we now have with the Niagara Escarpment, you will never, ever get it back.

I hope the government members will look at this. I hope they won't take the lead from the PA to the minister, who is obviously trying to protect the government's position and trying to justify the position. This is your opportunity. Private members' bills are your opportunity as members not to toe the party line, not to have to worry about what the whip tells you or what the Premier's office tells you or what the whiz kids in the Premier's office tell you you must do. This is an opportunity for you to do what you believe is right, to do what you believe the majority of your constituents would favour. Put yourself in a situation where your area is affected by this type of issue and this type of decision and say, "What would be in the best interests of protecting my constituents here?" If you did that, I think you would support the resolution.

It's a very good resolution. It makes it very clear in many ways that the government's direction, when it comes to the escarpment, may not be the best route to go; that this government maybe should take a step back and realize that it is an area we need to protect. It is not an area that we can give away to developers.

All the bills the member for Northumberland talked about — he used all the right buzz words: "If it's suitable, we can fast-track it. If there are problems we just say no." The reality is that every piece of legislation this government has passed when it comes to development, every single piece of legislation, has been slanted heavily to favour the development industry. It's been fast-tracked, favourite. You hide behind cutting red tape, which means cutting regulations and making it easier, making it faster, at the expense of the environment, at the expense of the Niagara Escarpment. I think we need to take a step back.



1040

The development industry is important in this province. They create jobs, they create revenue, they pay taxes. Of course they're very important, but at the same time there is more to it than that. We simply cannot give the whole house away, the whole province away to one particular industry because of the short-term gain and the short-term development we may see, because of the long-term price to pay.

I will support this resolution. I commend the member for Wentworth North for once again standing up for his constituents, the people he represents, the people who have brought him here to Queen's Park, and I hope the members of the government will look at that, will see some courage and leadership in that and will support the resolution in front of us today.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I'm happy to hear today that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment and Energy, the member for Northumberland, has faith in the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Environment. How very nice. We're happy to hear he has faith in the minister who's responsible — standing here saying he has faith.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** What a lapdog.

**Ms Churley:** As my colleague from Nickel Belt is saying here, a lapdog. Is he telling the people of Ontario: "Not to worry. We don't need strong laws to protect the environment in Ontario. Just have faith. Trust the minister"? Come on.

I've got to tell the member for Wentworth North, hearing the parliamentary assistant today, his resolution is doomed because the parliamentary assistant is speaking on behalf of the Minister of Environment and therefore Mike Harris, the Premier, and the government. No matter how many people from your caucus today support this motion, this resolution, it's dead because of that.

I'm shocked that the member for Northumberland can get up and say that we don't need it because laws are already in place; and not only that, this government has strengthened the Environmental Assessment Act. To put it in a parliamentary way, that is not my interpretation and what all the outside environmental experts in the field would say. In fact, what has happened with the Environmental Assessment Act is that it will now be easier for the developers to develop, because up front at the very beginning now there's what's called a scoping process where the parties get together and scope out how the Environmental Assessment Act for this particular undertaking will work.

Guess what? During that process, the very heart and soul of EA that gives the most protection, particularly around items and issues like landfills which can be extremely polluting for a very long time, now what can be scoped out would be the need for the undertaking, alternatives to the undertaking and alternatives to the site. That can be scoped out now off the top.

When you have an EA Act that takes out the very heart and soul, that actually makes it — we had the most progressive EA system probably, I don't know about in the world but certainly in North America. This government steps in and deregulates. They gutted the most important aspects. The parliamentary assistant stands up

today and says: "Don't worry, member for Wentworth North, we've got all the protections in the world. This is a duplication. We don't need it." We know that is hogwash.

I am more worried about what's going to happen to the Niagara Escarpment than I was when I came in here to speak to my colleague's resolution today, because of the deregulation and the cuts to the ministry, and particularly, as all the other members from the opposition who spoke pointed out here today, as the escarpment has now been transferred from the Ministry of Environment and Energy over to the Ministry of Natural Resources.

We also know that this government, after waiting a long, long time — and I think it was public pressure and the knowledge that this big huge story about the escarpment was coming out in the *Toronto Star* — suddenly, after leaving many openings on the escarpment commission for a long time, finally at the last minute appointed people. At least one of those people, as has been pointed out already, opposes the existence of the commission. That in itself is very worrisome when you add it to the other issues I and others have brought up today.

The fact that the government today, through the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment, is saying, "No, there's no reason to support this," if we had any doubts before that this government is heading in the direction of more development in the Niagara Escarpment, we can be assured today because of the fact that the parliamentary assistant won't support this added protective measure.

I want to tell the member for Wentworth North that I am willing to work with him and I'm willing to stand in this House. I hope he will do so. I hope that as a backbencher he will get questions to the minister frequently and publicly raise this issue, and ask and ask and ask again, if it passes today, that it go forward. I remember our former member for Halton North did that on occasions. Our government passed that bill and it's now the law. What this one does today is extend that in a very necessary way. But I remember that the member for Halton North at the time did ask some questions in the House. He kept the pressure on, he did his lobbying behind the scenes and he made sure that the members of the government did not forget this. I hope the member for Wentworth North will do the same, notwithstanding the difference that in our government the Minister of the Environment actually stood up for and protected the environment.

I know the member today has a different problem. He has a minister against the environment. He has a minister who has deregulated and cut to the very bone and is continuing to do so. We have a Minister of Natural Resources who has absolutely no concern for the environment. We have the member for Grey-Owen Sound as a sort of quasi-member of that caucus over there, on again, off again. I don't know how wide his influence is these days on those matters to do with the Niagara Escarpment, but we all know where he stands. We certainly do: "Pave it all over."

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** Oh, he wants to leave a few acres, I believe he said. A few what?



**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** A few places.

**Ms Churley:** A few places, right. That's the attitude of some in that government. I know not all, and that's why I'm very pleased today to see that the member for Wentworth North is bringing forward this resolution. I would ask the members to seriously consider supporting it and I would ask that you look carefully at the words of the member for Northumberland today, because in my opinion you should not put your faith in the words of the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment. That is my advice to you.

I know it's hard for colleagues in the same party to not just take as true every word that is uttered by one of their members. Obviously in this House I would not for a moment — the Speaker isn't listening; maybe I will. I lost my train here; I'm going to be in trouble with the Speaker. I'm not suggesting for a moment that what the member for Northumberland is saying isn't true — I wouldn't do that — but what I would suggest is that he is misguided, that he doesn't understand the implication of what his government is doing.

I remember that same member saying about the Environmental Assessment Act, when he was complaining about all these things you have to do: "In some cases at landfills you don't have to look at all these complicated rigorous things. You've just got to figure out what the best-engineered lining is and just dig the hole and put it in the ground." I remember he said that. These words I will leave you with.

I will say to the member, I support your motion very strongly and so does all my caucus. Good luck with it.  
1050

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** The motion before us today is, "That in the opinion of this House, spent limestone quarries within (a) the Niagara Escarpment planning area of the Niagara Escarpment plan as defined in the Niagara Escarpment and Planning Act, or (b) an area that is within a five-kilometre radius adjacent to the said Niagara Escarpment planning area, are not suitable locations for solid waste disposal landfill sites."

I wish to address this motion put forward today by my colleague the member for Wentworth North because I am personally in favour of this motion. In fact, I am sure anyone who appreciates the natural beauty of this province should be in favour of this motion. Any one of us in this House could spend hours talking about the escarpment and why it is one of the world's unique natural resources. As residents of this province and members of this Legislature, it is our duty to protect the Niagara Escarpment.

I served on the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority for some 17 years, chairing that authority for two years. Of course the Nottawasaga Valley runs through the escarpment. My experience in the conservation authority has given me a thorough understanding of the delicate nature of this region of Ontario. I know at first hand the inspiring scenery, rich farm soil, abundant and rare plant life and flourishing wildlife. This region abuts this country's most densely populated area, yet it remains unchanged by commercial development.

The lesson here for all of us is that a continuous natural environment can live and flourish in the centre of

growing human habitation and large productive cities. The dilemma we now face is protecting this environment while finding a solution to the waste generated by these large productive cities.

In searching for answers, we must look at three areas: product packaging, recycling and resource recovery.

In the area of product packaging, let me describe a recent incident where I was given an automotive accessory gift by my wife. The product was fastened to a large, heavy gauge cardboard and then shrink-wrapped in a skin of clear plastic, which was placed in a plastic bag. The disposed packaging was actually larger than the purchased item. The article could just as easily have been hung on a hook in the store with an instruction tag attached.

I suggest we start at the beginning and create less packaging which can be recycled. We also must look at increasing our volume of recycling. In Japan as an example, 30% of ordinary waste is recycled.

Resource recovery is possible. They are doing it now in Switzerland where 75% of its garbage is converted into energy. The other 25% of that country's waste is targeted for recycling. None of Switzerland's trash will be sent to landfills. These are the goals we must establish here in Ontario.

There are other ways. Other countries are doing it and they are successful. In fact, several states in the US are finding alternatives to landfill. In Lee county, Florida, they began cremating 950 tons of garbage a day in August 1994 with no threat to our environment. That is energy from waste. In my opinion, there is no need for new landfill sites. We must find more creative ways of reintroducing the Niagara Escarpment's spent quarry sites back to a natural, friendly use.

We are the caretakers of our environment and our habitat. It is our responsibility to protect the earth we grow our food in, the air we breathe, the water we drink and the life-forms that share our environment and habitat.

Garbage stinks. It attracts rodents. Leaking gases from dumps is sickening. Rotting refuse seeps into natural aquifers — which happened in Tiny township some years ago — polluting our life-giving water supply. Life, human or otherwise, next to a garbage dump, is life deteriorating.

We cannot afford to let that happen to the Niagara Escarpment, or for that matter we cannot let that happen anywhere in Ontario. The passing of this resolution will continue to protect the natural beauty and the significance of the escarpment for all of Ontario for now and in the future.

We have some 17 garbage sites in the county of Simcoe. I often wonder what's going to happen in the future. We have them on the lakes, near our cities and in our cities. When we continue to dump garbage continuously, I can see some problems down the road. I'm saying the biggest emphasis should be on the recycling, the reusing and packaging. That packaging to me has got to be one of the biggest issues. What we're doing about it is not enough.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I'm pleased to rise today to address the resolution from the member for Wentworth North, Mr Skarica, on spent limestone



quarries being used for solid waste landfill sites within the five-kilometre radius of the Niagara Escarpment planning area. I want to say to the member for Wentworth North that I will be supporting his motion.

The Niagara Escarpment limestone is heavily fissured, as has been mentioned by the member for Algoma. No one knows exactly where these fissures and underground channels lead. To find out where they lead would be extremely costly. I know there are technologies available using dye and other technology, but there's no assurance where any of the seepage from any of these landfill sites would go. There's a great likelihood they would drain into the groundwater which is used for drinking water and also is used commercially for bottled water, which means there's both a health and a commercial livelihood factor; in other words, there's an effect on the economy and jobs in this area.

Where would the seepage from the landfill end up after it went through the fissures and underground channels? We really don't know. Experts tell us they're not able to actually determine where it would go. That's something that is of concern to me. There are some consultants and companies that say they can prevent seepage by lining the fissures with a sealant substance, although I believe the linings or liners would actually leak. There is a risk to commercial bottling. There's the personal use risk. There's the health risk, a commercial livelihood risk and, again, we don't know where that seepage would go.

Apart from these, a landfill will destroy the aesthetics of the area and threaten the wildlife and plant life that people from all across Ontario enjoy, including people from Scarborough and Scarborough Centre. I have many constituents who have spoken to me about the Niagara Escarpment. Although it's a good drive from Scarborough and Scarborough Centre to the Niagara Escarpment, they care about preserving this part of Ontario.

Originally the plan was to ensure that quarried areas were rehabilitated, but they were rehabilitated to their original landscape, not to commercial landfill sites. I don't think it's worth risking. Liners and linings will potentially leak and seep into the groundwater.

The member for Wentworth North is from a different part of Ontario than I'm from. If this was an issue in my riding, I would ask him to support me on a motion like that. Constituents of mine like Bill Baker care deeply about the Niagara Escarpment and he has spoken to me extensively about it before the election, during the election and after the election in June 1995, that his concerns be brought forward.

I thank the member for Wentworth North for bringing this forward. I will be supporting him on this. I appreciate the opportunity.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** I also am pleased to have an opportunity to speak very briefly about the resolution that's been brought forward by the member for Wentworth North. The Niagara Escarpment extends from Niagara all the way up to Georgian Bay. It is an area of great beauty and value, not only to the Niagara area but to all those counties leading up to Georgian Bay.

The environment is an issue that I think doesn't relate to left or right on the political scale. It's an issue that

concerns all people who think reasonably about the future of our lives in Ontario, and therefore I am pleased to support the resolution brought forward by the member for Wentworth North. I compliment him on bringing it before this House this day.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Wentworth North, you have two minutes.

**Mr Skarica:** I'd like to thank all my colleagues in all parties in the House for their support of this bill. Quite frankly, when I heard the member for Riverdale use the word "doom," I thought she was talking about my political future, as opposed to the resolution.

If I could just address some of the points, particularly the point made by the member for Simcoe East when he said the real solution to this problem is to get at the source of the problem, and that's the garbage itself, and he talked about recycling: In my former life as a parliamentary assistant I attended many schools in the province. There was in my riding an elementary school with approximately 200 to 300 children. On a daily basis they produced garbage that could be put into a bag approximately the size of a Toronto Sun newspaper. They recycled everything there. The children had tremendous enthusiasm for recycling. They of course were inspired in their effort by the fact that this school was just under the escarpment, and the dump, if it had been put in, would have been hovering just over them both physically and in their future.

The real future for this garbage problem is recycling. I have a lot of faith in recycling. My own future depends on my being recycled to some extent as well. I thank all the members for their support.

1100

#### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (SCHOOL BUSES), 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES)

Mr Froese moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 137, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to school buses / Projet de loi 137, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui a trait aux autobus scolaires.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Pursuant to standing order 96(c)(i), the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** My bill proposes to amend section 163, subsections (1) and (2); that school buses stop at railway crossings, whether protected or unprotected and whether or not transporting children and adults with developmental disabilities. It also amends section 175, subsections (6), (7), (8) and (13), including a clause that states:

"(6.1) Every school bus driver who stops on a highway immediately behind another school bus driver who has stopped for a purpose set out in clause (6)(a) or to whom this subsection applies shall actuate the overhead red signal lights and the stop arm on the bus while stopped."

As a government, as parents and as concerned citizens we do all we can to bring up our children in a way that will prepare them to be productive members of society.



We also do everything we can to keep them safe. When they are young we teach them to walk, climb, run and to look both ways when they cross the street. What we tend to forget to teach them, at least up until now, is that bus drivers are human and make mistakes and that many Ontario drivers cannot be trusted to look out for their safety.

Those are tough words, but when I hear of young children dying in the vicinity of our school buses, I am outraged. There was the recent tragedy to young Andrew Friessen in Aylmer, as well as tragedies that happened to Ryan Marcuzzi in Essex county, near Windsor, and Tyler Guenette of Sudbury. These are young lives that needn't have been cut short.

All adults know that children get excited, that children run to meet their friends, to meet their brothers and sisters when they see them and that they slip and fall. They are, after all, children. Children are spontaneous, they get excited, they assume all is right in the world. Why can't the Ontario driving public drive defensively when it comes to children and school buses and expect the unexpected, slow down, check and stop when they are required to do so?

I was born and brought up in rural Niagara. As a youngster, school buses were part of my everyday life. In rural Ontario, school buses are part of the very fabric of the educational experience. That is where you spend time with friends, that is where you grow up and that is where you should be safe from harm, whether on the school bus, getting off the school bus or being a passenger.

When I was approached by Rodger Bailey, a St Catharines resident and property manager a few months back, it was my first experience as an MPP with the extent of the dark side of school bus safety. Mr Bailey told me about a near tragedy that he had personally witnessed. He said he had seen two school buses travelling in tandem, and when they stopped, one immediately behind the other, only the front bus had its warning signals activated. Although the front bus was the only one discharging passengers, the warning lights could not be seen behind the second bus. As a result, he said someone attempted to pass before they saw the warning signals. In this case the accident was averted, but only just in time.

I made inquiries on behalf of Mr Bailey and discovered that the driver of the second bus was not in contravention of the Highway Traffic Act and had no obligation to put on his or her warning signals, that only the bus that was receiving or discharging passengers is required to so.

I also made inquiries of the Ontario School Bus Association and discovered that school bus drivers are expected to stop well behind the first bus and position themselves slightly to the right so that the vehicles coming from behind have a clear line of vision of the warning signals of the first bus. I can tell you from the years I've travelled on buses or behind buses and stopped behind them, I have never seen this type of stopping manoeuvre.

As a result, I decided I would put forward this bill, with the amendment being the provision that when school buses are travelling in tandem and stop one behind the

other, no matter which bus is receiving or discharging students, they activate their warning signals and stop arm to warn the drivers behind.

The industry has recommended educational programs for the driving public, educators, parents and children. I agree education is important and there should be more done. We need more programs of this type. However, I disagree that the act should not include the additional safety measure of insisting that the stop-arm warning-light system should be activated on all school buses stopped in tandem. Obviously, some school bus drivers contravene the act. Equally obvious is the fact that Ontario drivers need to be given sufficient warning that children are being discharged from the bus.

The other amendment in my bill resulted from discussions with the industry's school bus association. It was brought to my attention by the industry that they were going to ask that all school bus drivers stop when approaching railway crossings, whether protected or unprotected, with or without passengers on board. We have to protect our children and we have to provide consistency to Ontario drivers: that school buses stop at all railway crossings all the time.

The potential for tragedy is incredible. On October 25, 1995, at Fox River, Illinois, near Chicago, seven children were killed when the school bus they were travelling in was hit by a train at just such a protected railway crossing while waiting in line for a traffic light.

This is a clear reminder of school bus driver misjudgment and that technology can fail. Had the school bus been required to stop five metres before the nearest rail, regardless of the traffic light beyond, the driver would have seen or heard the oncoming train. Ontario drivers need to know that no matter what, that yellow school bus has to stop five metres from the nearest rail at a railway crossing and that they will need to be patient while stopped.

I'm aware that the Minister of Transportation is reviewing the legislation pertaining to school buses and that the Ministry of Education and Training is in the process of compiling a comprehensive school bus safety resource package. I am also aware that there is another private member's bill in committee related to school safety and changes to penalties. However, I would ask the members of this House to consider my bill on its own as it is not, in my view, a duplication of other perspectives or pending legislation. I ask all the members of this House to support this bill.

1110

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I take part in this private member's bill from the member for St Catharines-Brock on school bus safety out of a concern for the students in my riding and the students across the province. My comments won't be long, but I feel compelled to add a few words.

Let me begin by saying I have great faith in the men and women who take on the responsibility of busing our children to and from school. They do a great job. For those who have spent time on the yellow school bus, perhaps chaperoning our children, they are almost saints in the opinion of many.



However, through time and, unfortunately, incidents at railroad crossings, it seems that the provincial laws governing school buses may not be adequate for the protection of drivers and in fact may be punishing the drivers for just trying to do their job to the letter of the law.

This is something I feel very strongly about and very personally about. As the basis for my concern, I point to an incident that happened last winter when a busload of students in my riding were caught. I understand that the incident was through no fault of the driver but rather the driver applying the rules of section 174 to the Highway Traffic Act and thus encountering a faulty mechanical arm at a railway crossing.

Before I tell you exactly what happened, let me say I am grateful that no one was injured, but the consequences could have been very serious. I shudder to think what might have happened. I hope I am recounting this exactly the way it was. The bus driver having stopped, looked both ways and proceeded on to the railroad tracks at the Avonmore Road in Cornwall township. Then there was a mechanical fluke. Almost as quickly as the bus encountered the railway, signal lights came on and the arm dropped, striking the roof of the bus. The driver stopped, reversed the bus until the arm mechanism fell from the roof on to the hood and reached the mirrors. The train then passed. No one was harmed, but the children and the driver were very frightened.

Why did this happen? Was it because the driver wasn't obeying the rules or because he wasn't careful enough? Not at all. The driver was following the rules. After hearing about the mishap from a concerned constituent of mine, Wayne Rock, and one of the two boards in my riding, my staff and I dug into the provisions for school buses at rail crossings. Through this I learned that the Ministry of Transportation's truck and bus drivers' manual stipulates that drivers approaching unprotected crossings must halt, open the door, look in both directions and then proceed.

However, the requirements for drivers nearing protected crossings, those with gates and signal lights, are quite different. When a bus approaches such a protected crossing, if the signal lights are not flashing and the protective gates are not lowering, the bus need not stop but only should use normal caution, such as slowing down and looking both ways before crossing.

I then consulted a memorandum from legal counsel of the Solicitor General's ministry. Not only did this memo confirm these facts, it further said that if a bus stops at a protected railway crossing, it may impede traffic and does so without legal basis. If an accident were to arise out of such an act, the driver could be charged under the Highway Traffic Act.

I admit I was surprised at this information, especially as I know I have witnessed many school and municipal buses as well as private coaches stop at protected, unprotected and abandoned railroad crossings. I had assumed that was the right procedure, but it's not. Bus drivers do not have to stop at protected crossings, and if they do and any kind of accident results, the government has laid out rules that the bus driver could be charged. Charged for being cautious. Charged because the wording

of the Highway Traffic Act may not be in the best interests of bus safety.

After the Avonmore incident and after confirming bus laws at railroad crossings, the board for whom this particular bus was working requested that the distinction in the Highway Traffic Act be amended so that buses be required to stop at all crossings, protected or unprotected. Upon receiving this request, I contacted the other board in my riding as well as the Minister of Transportation. I asked for their views on this statute, wanting to secure complete support that the existing provisions should be changed.

I recognize that only one board, the Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry County Board of Education, which had this incident happen, lent its support. The other board, the SD&G Catholic board, indicated that they preferred to wait for recommendations from the Ontario School Bus Association. To date, I have not received confirmation from either the association or the Catholic school board.

Nevertheless, in my view, and I know in the view of many of the parents and the drivers I have spoken to, they would like to see the same rules, whether protected or unprotected. I think back to this incident last February and it scares me to think what might have happened. Before we vote on this bill, I ask all members of the House to picture a bus being trapped at a railroad crossing. This is not a pleasant sight.

I have spoken to the minister on several occasions and I am very confident that this will happen so we don't have any other incidents like that in the near future.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I am pleased to be able to stand today on behalf of the New Democratic caucus as the transportation critic and give support to this private member's bill.

I think far too often not so much us but people forget that there is a time in the Legislature where members try to come here to be able to respond to issues that exist within their ridings or issues that exist within the province and to bills that are brought here, really in a non-partisan way, to address what are real issues within the community of Ontario.

In this particular case, the member across the way has brought forward a bill that deals with fixing up the Highway Traffic Act, because the Highway Traffic Act, when it comes to school buses, is fairly explicit in regard to the laws that the operators have to use their flashing lights when stopping and unloading children and they're supposed to stop at railway crossings. But there are some gaps within the law that I don't think were put there for any reason; that was just the way the bill was written. There were gaps that were created. The member is coming here before the House today to try to fix those gaps in order to hopefully in the end save lives and make sure the children who are travelling on our school buses are that much safer when they're being transported to and from school.

1120

Specifically, the member is trying to deal with two areas. This, I want to say, is not an overwhelming problem, but none the less there have been accidents where there have been tragedies because of this and I think this is what the member is trying to respond to.



Any loss of life or endangerment of life of any child is something that we as legislators within this precinct should be able to try to address, and I want to commend the member for doing that.

To the point, there are two parts of this bill that the member is dealing with. First of all, he's trying to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act in regard to section 175 dealing with how a bus approaches railway crossings because, as you know, not all railway crossings are guarded by either a barricade system or lights. In short, what the member is saying is that when a school bus approaches those particular crossings, regardless if there is a gate system or a light system, the school bus driver must stop the bus, must flash the lights, must open the door, must look both ways and then, when crossing a railway crossing where it is an unprotected crossing, must do so in a very cautious way by not taking off and trying to switch gears as you're going over the tracks but rather going across it in an orderly fashion, not switching gears while you're going over the tracks.

Some people might say that's kind of silly. Why would the government or why would a member even be concerned with something like that? In fact, there have been cases where buses have crossed railway crossings — I'm not aware here in Ontario and I'm sure the member might bring one to mind, but I remember one particular case, I think it was in Minnesota, where a bus was crossing an unprotected crossing. As the bus driver was trying to go across, that driver didn't see the train coming, number one, should have been able to make it, but in switching the gears somehow lost the momentum of the bus because they didn't make the change in gear adequately and ended up getting the back end of the bus cut off. Unfortunately that resulted in the tragic loss of life of I think some five or six school-aged children. That's what the member is trying to address here, and I'm sure all members in the House will support this legislation. I would be very surprised if it didn't pass by unanimous consent.

The second part that the member is trying to address is equally an interesting amendment that he's bringing to the Highway Traffic Act, again section 175. The member is saying that if three buses are following each other and the first bus stops to unload children, by law only the first bus that has stopped is required to flash the signals on the front and the back of the bus. The second bus and the third bus behind don't have to. Again, there have been incidents where a driver, arriving upon a school bus, sees a stopped school bus but doesn't see the bus all the way in the front of the line with the flashing lights and thinks, "There are no flashing lights. It's probably just a bus that's stopped for some reason. Maybe I can go around it," and swings out around the third or the second bus behind only to find that there are flashing lights, and quite possibly a child might be trying to cross the road on that flashing light from the bus and the driver would not know.

In the first place, I would say most drivers exercise caution when it comes to any school bus but I think again the member is pointing out correctly that there is a section in the Highway Traffic Act that needs to be amended in order to make sure we take no chances when it comes to the safety of our children. What he's saying

is that if there are three buses lined up consecutively, all of them are responsible for flashing their warning lights in order to make sure there is no question in the driver's mind that that is a school bus that is stopped and the reason it's stopped is that it's unloading children.

So again I commend the member: two amendments to the Highway Traffic Act that make a lot of sense. It's something that all members should really take a look at in order to be able to support.

Je voudrais seulement dire par rapport à ce débat qu'on a aujourd'hui que souvent ici à l'Assemblée on a l'opportunité comme députés de la Chambre de rentrer ici à l'Assemblée et de passer une législation ou essayer d'arranger des problèmes par résolution d'une manière vraiment non politique. Je pense qu'on se sert très bien, la plupart du temps, comme députés, de cette opportunité qu'on a le jeudi matin.

Ça démontre, je pense, à la population ontarienne que quand on veut travailler ensemble, nous les députés de l'Assemblée, peu importe si on est conservateur, NPD ou libéral, à la fin de la journée on est tous des députés qui étions élus par nos citoyens. On a tous le même intérêt, et cet intérêt est simplement de servir le public de notre comté et de venir ici pour adresser les questions qui sont importantes aux citoyens et citoyennes de nos comtés.

S'il y a une leçon à apprendre dans tout ce qu'on voit ici faisant affaire avec les jeudis matin, c'est possiblement qu'on a besoin de regarder d'une manière à être capable de moderniser notre Parlement pour allouer beaucoup plus d'opportunités où les députés peuvent venir ici et travailler d'une manière on dirait non politique quand ça vient aux partis. Je pense que, si les citoyens de la province et du pays sont écoeurés de la question des politiciens, de la question des partis politiques, c'est parce qu'ils nous voient souvent ici à l'Assemblée nous ranger dans une confrontation politique bien farouche à toute occasion. Je pense que c'est la manière dont le Parlement marche parce que c'est la manière dont le Parlement était mis en place.

Une des questions qu'on a besoin d'adresser ici à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, c'est comment moderniser notre Parlement afin qu'il travaille vraiment pour la population ontarienne d'une manière beaucoup plus positive. Cette motion que le député conservateur amène répond et démontre à la population que quand on le veut, comme représentants politiques de nos comtés, on peut venir ici et avancer la législation qui est très positive pour nos citoyens et citoyennes et travailler ensemble.

J'attends pour voir la journée où que le Parlement va arriver à ce point-là non à travers les changements aux règlements de la Chambre que le gouvernement conservateur amène, mais vraiment regarder comment on modernise le système, la manière par laquelle on élit nos parlementaires et la manière dans laquelle la Législature elle-même travaille.

I just want to say to the member, congratulations. I think a motion well done, obviously something that needs to be done. I hope all members of the House find it in their hearts and in their minds to support this very good resolution under Bill 137.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** Thank you very much, Speaker, for allowing me to join in the



discussion on Bill 137 presented today by the member for St Catharines-Brock.

I think this particular piece of legislation is presented by him not only out of concern from residents in his riding bringing up this particular issue in all its consequences, but also in his role as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training. I think he sees the necessity of understanding the consequences for effective protection for our most precious resource: our future young citizens in this province. On that basis the member for St Catharines-Brock is to be congratulated for bringing this initiative forward to private members' hour and for some action from the Ministry of Transportation.

With regard to the first section of the bill, or that aspect that deals with requiring school buses to stop at all protected and unprotected railway crossings, as you know, protected Canadian railway crossings are designed in a fail-safe manner. This means that in the event of an electrical problem, the crossing lights and barriers are activated. School buses are not currently required to stop at protected railway crossings. However, some school bus companies have adopted a policy of stopping at all railway crossings, whether protected or not. Although there are arguments both for and against this practice, as some bus companies have decided to stop, by policy, at all crossings, the transportation ministry favours this particular dimension of the bill, and it would achieve consistency across the province for all school bus companies.

1130

With regard to the second issue raised in this bill — that any vehicle following a school bus that has its lights and arm engaged must stop at least 20 metres behind a school bus — as other members have mentioned, this would also apply to a school bus that was following another, and there is some degree of concern that this could create confusion.

However, the ministry's position on this, and it's probably consistent with the Ontario School Bus Association, is that in our public school bus safety initiative to be presented this fall, we will be stressing that the motoring public ought to be observing that 20-metre separation between the first bus stopped to take on children and any other school bus or any other public vehicle. I think that will be very heightened in the public education program that we will be undertaking this fall.

Also, I think I can say with impunity that the school bus operators have, as does the Ministry of Transportation, the protection and safety of our children at heart in all instances, and I think they would probably cooperate in looking at how we can further remove that confusion in the motoring public's mind about the provision of the current law, that the vehicle following behind the first school bus that has stopped to take on children, whether it be the private motoring citizen or another school bus operator — I think we need to look at further investigation in that particular area.

Let me conclude by offering the Ministry of Transportation's cooperation with regard to that second matter of the 20-metre separation between the first stopped bus vehicle and the second. I think we need to work together as motoring public, as members of the School Bus

Operators' Association and anybody else who are parents concerned with the future of their children. As many members have pointed out, there have been ongoing unfortunate tragedies over the years, and we must take all efforts to ensure that our children, when they are going to and from school, getting off and on buses, are protected as much as is possible.

Bill 138, dealing with aggressive behaviour of drivers, enhanced penalties for drunk driving, particularly for repeat offenders, will have a very drastic and positive impact on aggressive driving behaviour in this province. In the estimation of many members of the motoring public, whether those drivers be truck drivers or private citizens or school bus operators, we must attempt to curb the aggression we see in many folks in this province, unfortunately driving at aggressive speeds and totally oblivious to the concerns of parents and young children.

Today is a good day to start reminding people, anybody viewing this discussion, if they know of sons or daughters or members of any family who are aggressive drivers, that they look to what is going to happen in Bill 138, with the enhanced penalties for impaired driving, and this type of initiative brought forward by the member for St Catharines-Brock. This government has at hand the best interests of protecting our future citizens in this province, as it does everybody else, in terms of transporting our young people to and from school or any related activity that goes on through the school boards.

Thank you for allowing me to support the initiative today in Bill 137.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I welcome this opportunity to speak on school bus safety and the bill that was brought forward by the member for St Catharines-Brock. I support the measures contained in this bill as it is an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act, and I support the bill because the goal is to protect the children of Ontario.

The bill calls for the school bus driver to stop at both unprotected and protected railway crossings. The member's reasoning for this is to bring continuity and remove confusion from the driving public about what school buses are doing in that regard. Currently, they do not have to stop at protected railway crossings. We must remove the confusion for the driving public, and perhaps this is a very good step towards that.

Second, the member is talking about buses that stop in tandem, whereby only the lead bus turns on its red flashing lights that demands that all vehicles stop behind that bus. He is suggesting that perhaps all buses in tandem should turn their lights on.

Maybe this is something that should be discussed further, but at first glance I think the member is trying to protect the children of Ontario, those who ride school buses daily, the 16,000 buses that travel across Ontario. I'll support that particular part of the bill in principle, because I have some other thoughts about it as well.

The member for St Catharines-Brock has provided no information in his backgrounder to the bill of any deaths or injuries caused by either the protected or unprotected railway question or buses moving in tandem.

However, there is a bill before this House, Bill 78, that was introduced 12 months ago, a year ago this month, that does address the issue of deaths and injuries. Eleven



school children have been killed in the last 10 years and 80 injured when owners of vehicles passed school buses when the red lights were flashing. That bill was brought forward in this House a year ago now, passed second reading in November of last year and has still to be brought forward to committee. This bill is to protect the 810,000 children that ride our buses.

I know that the minister in his comprehensive road safety bill has brought in a new level of fines for those that break this law. I agree it is a small step in the right direction, but getting convictions is very difficult, and the reason is because the school bus driver must identify the driver of the vehicle who passed that bus while the red lights were flashing. They must identify their face. It's very difficult, with blacked-out windows in many vehicles and the speed of vehicles, or if they pass from the back of the bus to the front. It is nearly impossible to identify the driver of a vehicle who flagrantly breaks the law in this regard. Bus drivers tell me that people are passing their buses twice a day. If there are 16,000 buses on our roads in Ontario, that is far too many chances taken by owners of vehicles in passing school buses.

Bill 78 goes further than the minister's bill in regard to fines and allows for vehicle liability. That would allow the bus driver to identify the vehicle by licence plate, and the owner of the vehicle would receive a fine. However, if the vehicle owner can tell us who was driving that vehicle that day, the fine would be applied to the driver of the vehicle. The bill does not fine both the vehicle owner and the driver of the vehicle on that given offence.

We need vehicle liability so that our bus drivers can identify the vehicles that are passing school buses with the red lights flashing at an alarming rate. I repeat that we have had deaths and injuries because the public is not paying attention to the law. We must give the law some teeth. We must give the law some meaning over and above raising fines, because there were fines for this offence long ago, and people disregard the law.

1140

I remind the members that there were 30,000 names on petitions supporting Bill 78 and the clause requiring vehicle liability. The police believe that vehicle liability is the only approach to enforcement of this law. Municipalities, school boards, teachers and of course the many parents across Ontario support the bill.

I hope the member for St Catharines-Brock will support Bill 78 further and will be speaking up in caucus and talking to the Minister of Transportation to say that Bill 78 has been in this House since June a year ago, had unanimous consent in November of last year and has yet to be called before the resources development committee. I'll be very curious to see how quickly the member's bill moves along in the legislative process. We need to get this bill into committee so that we can have full debate and the people who want to come and speak to Bill 78 can give testimony that it is the only way of getting convictions.

The member for St Catharines-Brock and I both share a willingness and a desire to protect the children who ride school buses daily. He says his bill — I'll use my own words — is a standalone bill from the comprehensive road safety bill. I believe that to be true. It's in his name;

it's his bill. So is Bill 78. It is a standalone bill from that of the comprehensive bill that the Minister of Transportation has brought in.

I was surprised to learn on the news this morning that police were asking the public to take down the licence numbers of reckless or dangerous drivers and call the police to let them know what those licence numbers are. There's a precedent that we should have vehicle liability brought forward from Bill 78.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** May I first congratulate the member for St Catharines-Brock for bringing forth this private member's bill. I think it's a very positive initiative and I commend him for doing so.

I also must say that the member who just spoke, the member for Essex-Kent, has very quickly established himself as a voice of compassion and reason in this whole area of school bus safety. When he speaks about school bus safety, we all should listen, because he really has done a very good job in that regard.

This particular bill is a step in the right direction. As I understand the bill, it basically says that if a school bus approaches railroad tracks, whether there are any signals on the track or whether there are gates on the track and they are activated, the school bus still must stop before crossing the tracks, must open the door and look both ways in case there's a noise or he hears a train coming, and must then put the bus into gear in such a way that he will not have to change gears before he or she has crossed the tracks.

The other aspect of it has to do with when there's more than one school bus and perhaps the first bus is discharging children and the second or third one behind it are not but they stop as well. The way it is now, they don't activate their signals or the Stop sign that comes out from the side of the bus. This bill would require that the buses behind that school bus have to do that.

Just this past week I was driving behind a couple of school buses; they both stopped but neither one of them activated their lights. It was in the afternoon, and I was somewhat puzzled about what was happening, so I stopped behind the school buses. The driver of a car coming behind me was leaning on the horn telling me to get moving, even though most prudent people would have done the same thing I had done, stopped in case the driver had forgotten to activate the lights or the Stop sign or perhaps they weren't working.

There still needs to be a lot of work done in regard to school bus safety. We need to take these steps until we get to the right place, where our children have the maximum protection.

I'm somewhat sceptical of the chances of this bill getting very far, because I doubt the Ministry of Transportation will support it. I listened to the member for Essex-Kent. His private member's bill — a very reasonable bill, in my view — received the unanimous support of this House, as I recall, and the government won't call it before the resources development committee for further debate. If they won't do it with that bill, I suspect they won't proceed with this bill either.

That's a disturbing trend we see happening in this House with private members' bills. Earlier this morning, the member for Wentworth North brought forth a bill to



protect the Niagara Escarpment, a very reasonable bill. There's nothing radical about it. Can you imagine anything radical coming out of the Tory rump caucus? Not a chance. I thought it was a very reasonable bill, yet the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment, not one of our leading environmental luminaries, I might say, spoke against it. So there goes the member for Wentworth North's bill. It hasn't got a chance of succeeding. I think the member for Wentworth North has a higher chance of getting in the Harris cabinet than his bill does of passing through this chamber.

I'm a little sceptical about what happens now with this bill from the member for St Catharines-Brock. I wish him well in that regard, because I think it is a step in the right direction.

I simply commend once again the member for St Catharines-Brock for bringing forth this bill. I think it's a step in the right direction. Unless we take those steps, we won't get to where we want to be, which is maximum protection of our children who ride on our school buses.

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** I'm honoured to have this opportunity to address private member's Bill 137, entitled the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (school buses), 1997, brought forward by my colleague the member for St Catharines-Brock.

The school bus is a fixture of rural and urban Ontario. It is an essential part of the machinery that keeps households in this province functioning. None of us gives much thought to the big yellow bus going past our homes in the morning or afternoon. It is just like putting your shoes on in the morning. We put our children on the bus and send them off to school. We have every confidence they will arrive at school safely and return home unharmed by that same bus.

Precisely because there's so much at stake in the use of buses, it is essential that the public have confidence in basic travel safety procedures. Any family that has lost a family member by accident knows the suffering and agonizing loss of a child. We must take every measure possible to protect these young lives and protect their families from the devastating loss of life or injury to our precious children.

In my riding of Simcoe East, the transportation committee of the Simcoe County Board of Education dealt with a petition from the Essex county boards last November. That petition was asking for support for private member's Bill 78, which imposed liability on the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus that has its overhead red signal lights flashing, and it set out proposed fines for failing to stop. The Simcoe County Board of Education endorsed the Essex board's petition. Currently, this bill has received second reading and has been referred to the resources development committee of this Legislature.

Bill 137 protects our school bus riders from the unexpected. It will require school bus drivers to stop at both unprotected and protected railway crossings. Warning signals are mechanical and can fail. Stopping and taking a physical look at the railway track is a simple human backup system, further protecting lives from the unexpected.

A second part of Bill 137 deals with buses stopped in tandem. For me, the second part of this bill is just good common sense. This bill calls for all buses to activate their stop signal and stop arm when receiving or discharging passengers. Obviously, it is difficult for the driver of an automobile who is behind or approaching the inactive bus to have a clear view of the bus that is receiving or discharging passengers. This creates an unfair situation. Currently, only the bus that is receiving or discharging passengers is required to do so.

Every bus driver in Ontario who has driven more than half an hour a day has some kind of situation that causes them to miss a heartbeat or two. Caution is needed. Bus drivers and motorists face many unpredictable circumstances suddenly and unexpectedly when on Ontario's roadways.

One day on Highway 12 between Orillia and Coldwater, I was heading west to Orillia. A school bus was coming towards me and the lights started flashing. I immediately put on my brakes and I stopped. The school bus stopped some 50 feet beyond where I was stopped. I often wonder what education these drivers have when it comes to when to turn on their flashing lights and when not to, but I also wonder what the travelling public out there feel their responsibility is when they stop: Do they stop when the lights are flashing? Do they stop when the arm comes out? When is it feasible for them to stop?

I think a little education needs to be done within the whole system with regard to drivers who put their flashing lights on too soon and with what happened to me, that after they had gone by, they stopped.

I think we must support this bill and protect our most precious cargo: our children. Bill 137 makes available a simple measure to guard against low-probability, high-consequence events, and I suggest it is wise to vote in favour of this bill.

1150

**Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex):** It's certainly a pleasure to add a few comments to this morning's debate on my colleague's bill, comments that, I might add, will be in support of his initiative.

I've come to know the member for St Catharines-Brock very well over the past two years, and he certainly brings a strong degree of conviction about education and the safety of children in this province. As a father, he obviously and routinely brings personal experiences and applications and concerns he may have on a variety of issues to the educational forefront, and I think that practical approach is very appropriate in terms of finding solutions to some of the problems we deal with.

I'm obviously very pleased to be working with him as well in the capacity of parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training. I know this is an issue that's very important to both of us as well as the ministry in this regard. His motivations are obviously well intentioned, as one could expect, and certainly the motive to protect the safety of our children is of primary importance to all of us. Too often we hear of tragic scenarios involving young people due to lack of enforcement or situations involving school buses across the province.

I thought it was important that I provide some remarks to the member for Essex-Kent, who I think raised an important issue, and that was in part the issue of driver behaviour. Too often we hear of cases that are reported to law enforcement agencies or by bus operators, but similarly, we do not hear about the numerous cases which aren't reported because of speed or other related factors that contribute to the bus operator being unable to recognize the individual or the situation. Too often I think we take for granted that we're speaking about issues that we know are occurring and not about what we don't know is happening.

I think this bill in part speaks to that. But as we look to the comments of the Ontario School Bus Association, which I think generally endorsed the viewpoint expressed by my colleague, they also raise the issue of behaviour and the consistency of behaviour, knowing the expectations of vehicular movements as they apply to school buses. That's an area of public education and awareness that drivers need to be aware of and need to inform themselves of. That will only parallel our efforts to provide the strong legislative frameworks that are needed to provide enforcement procedures and provisions that would ensure safety for all children in this province.

I think the focus is important in terms of not only the railway crossing provisions but also the provisions that address a tandem situation of school buses. The railway crossing speaks to the automated system, but too often as well in rural Ontario we have situations where visibility is somewhat impaired at crossing intersections due to a variety of reasons. I think, as a cautionary note, this provision would go a long way in addressing some of those practical concerns that happen from time to time.

In speaking with bus operators in my own community, I know they fully endorse the provisions the member is pursuing with respect to his bill. It's something they support as an industry. The individuals I've spoken to constantly retain or keep public safety in the forefront of their minds as school bus operators and in terms of the policy decision-making they're involved in with the various school boards they're serving.

In conclusion, I appreciate the opportunity to add a few brief comments. As someone who has 85% of his students based in the province, I certainly will be supporting the recommendations of my colleague.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for St Catharines-Brock, you have two minutes.

**Mr Froese:** I'd like to thank all members of the House who gave their comments and spoke to the bill. I'd like to thank Rodger Bailey, who lives in St Catharines, who brought this issue to my attention. I'd also like to thank the Ontario School Bus Association and particularly Rick Donaldson, who is here today. He has always been concerned about child safety and we've had excellent discussions and I have had some excellent advice as well on my bill.

This bill is about our children, our most precious resources. We need to do everything we can to protect them. I believe that my bill, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (school buses), 1997, will do that. But just as important as this bill, and again I would request support from all members of the House, is the education factor

around school bus safety and our children. I believe we need the law first and then the awareness must follow. There are excellent education programs out there already: the Peel safety program, the OPP officer on the train program, the OPP traffic management teams. There needs to be more education of parents and children through the schools. The school bus industry as well must include each of these issues in their training programs.

We all need to work together because, as I said before, our children are our most important resources. The lives of our children and our grandchildren depend on good bus driver practices, training children about safe school bus practices, correct loading zones and, last but not least, the defensive driving habits of the driving public.

#### WASTE DISPOSAL ON NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We will deal first with ballot item number 85, standing in the name of Mr Skarica. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Mr Skarica has moved private member's notice of motion number 60.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll deal with it afterwards.

#### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (SCHOOL BUSES), 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** We will now deal with ballot item number 86, standing in the name of Mr Froese. If any members are opposed to a vote on this ballot item, will they please rise.

Mr Froese has moved ballot item number 86, second reading of Bill 137.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?  
Carried.

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You didn't order it to committee. I would like it to go to the standing committee on social development.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

We will now vote on the first ballot item. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1159 to 1204.*

#### WASTE DISPOSAL ON NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr Skarica has moved ballot item number 85. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.  
Barrett, Toby

Gravelle, Michael  
Grimmett, Bill

McLeod, Lyn  
Munro, Julia



Bisson, Gilles	Guzzo, Garry J.	Newman, Dan
Boushy, Dave	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Johns, Helen	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Jordan, W. Leo	Shea, Derwyn
Conway, Sean G.	Klees, Frank	Sheehan, Frank
Cordiano, Joseph	Kormos, Peter	Skarica, Toni
Crozier, Bruce	Kwinter, Monte	Smith, Bruce
Doyle, Ed	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Tilson, David
Flaherty, Jim	Lankin, Frances	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Fox, Gary	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Froese, Tom	Leadston, Gary L.	Wood, Bob
Gerretsen, John	Martin, Tony	Wood, Len
Grandmaître, Bernard	McLean, Allan K.	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

#### Nays

Galt, Doug

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 50; the nays are 1.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

#### VISITOR

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Before we adjourn, I'd like you to recognize the former member for Wentworth East, Mr Mark Morrow.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1207 to 1330.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** It's very important that the people, not only in my riding but across Ontario, understand that Mike Harris wants to shut out every semblance of opposition to his government. We've seen him, through all his behaviour in his first two years of office, have absolute disdain and disregard for anyone who opposes his views.

We know that we are members of the loyal opposition and we understand that we have a key role to play in government here at Queen's Park. We insist, as members of the opposition, that we're given that right to act as the official opposition and to do so in an appropriate manner. That means we need to have all the tools available to us that we have had this far.

We believe the government is trying to change the rules of this House because we have been effective, because we have been able to effect change in policies that have been set by this Mike Harris government that have not been in the best interests of the public all across Ontario.

I'd like to read just a portion of what Ernie Eves himself had to say in opposition. He said it "is through the opposition parties' ability to debate, and yes, on occasion even stall or slow down the progress of a particular bill, and that has worked very effectively over the years against governments of all political stripes."

What is the finance minister saying today when he is part of the ruling hand of Mike Harris that tries to shut down the opposition?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Ontarians are witnessing the most vicious assault on democracy that's ever been committed in this province. This government's adamancy and insistence on creating so-called new rules is an abandonment of the role and responsibilities and duties of every member of this Legislative Assembly. This government shows nothing but disdain for this assembly. It shows nothing but disdain for the responsibilities that elected members, be they government members or opposition members, have to their constituents and to the people of this province.

It is an important element in this parliamentary tradition that debate is used to address and resolve issues. This government prefers to abandon debate. I tell them now that they are inviting tactics by citizenry and by members of communities across this province that are going to be as harsh in kind as the harshness with which they're attacking democratic institutions.

This government doesn't want to undergo the scrutiny of an opposition. This government knows its policies are condemning this province to increased poverty, joblessness, unemployment and despair for sick people, for seniors and for young people and students alike. This government is abandoning democracy, just as it is abandoning Ontario working —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Scarborough Centre.

#### DAVID CHU

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I am pleased to rise in the House today to honour David S.H. Chu, a great Ontarian and true supporter of education in this province.

On Friday of last week, Mr Chu was honoured by the University of Toronto with an honorary doctorate of laws degree, conferred upon him at Scarborough College's convocation ceremony.

David Chu, a Canadian citizen and resident of Hong Kong, is one of the leading business exponents of vigorous technology-based economic development as a means of widening contacts between China and the rest of the world. He has been a leader in promoting economic stability and was recognized by the People's Republic of China by being appointed as a member of the selection committee to choose the first chief executive of Hong Kong. Chu is known as a businessperson of the highest integrity and trustworthiness.

David Chu is also a committed supporter of education in this province. Recently he made a generous gift to support initiatives of the faculty of arts and science in the study of the Asia-Pacific region which will make possible the creation of an endowment chair and establish scholar-

ships for U of T undergraduate and graduate students studying in Pacific Rim countries.

His gift will also fund a public program to increase understanding of modern China and allow the university to host scholars, business and government experts from the Asia-Pacific area who can contribute to the university's growing education and research focus there.

I would ask every member of the Legislature to join me in congratulating David Chu on this most deserved honour.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** Mike Harris's government is always in a hurry to ram through its agenda, but for the Minister of Education that's never fast enough. John Snobelen needs the new rule changes to go through because he has a lot to do and he doesn't want to be interrupted with inconvenient things like consultation or public hearings. In fact, the less people know about what the Minister of Education is doing, the better, because then no one will get in his way.

The Mike Harris government has already declared war on non-teaching school board employees and municipal employees. Now Mike Harris's education minister wants to do the same thing to teachers. If he gets the rule changes he can bring in a bill to strip away teachers' rights next week and have it passed before the summer break. Better yet, he can bring it in in August and pass it in less than a week, before anyone even notices it's happening. If students face striking teachers in September, so what? The government's dirty work will be neatly, quietly, already done.

The Minister of Education doesn't believe in working with people to bring about change. He says that "leadership is the act of getting where you're now already going." Translation: "Get out of my way." He defines power as "the rate at which your intentions become reality."

With these rule changes the Harris government will have much more power to make its intentions reality a lot faster. They will ram their agenda through, but that isn't real leadership and it certainly isn't democracy.

Mike Harris and his colleagues should take time to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** "Unilateral actions by governments...will result in nothing but chaos and acrimony around here for the next two or three years...."

"You can't always have everything your own way. When you don't get something you think you should have, don't be too petulant about it, don't be too autocratic about it and don't be too dictatorial about it. Try to approach it with a sense of spirit of generosity and compromise and you might find you get a lot more things done than you're getting done this way. Just some free advice for the government House leader."

"If any government ever did proceed unilaterally with rule changes, it would become a very acrimonious place indeed."

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Who said that?

**Mr Wildman:** You want to know who said that? The member for Parry Sound made those comments when he

was the House leader for the third party because he understood how things work around this place. He understood democracy, he understood that rules must serve all the members and serve the public and the people of Ontario. He understood that governments could not act in a dictatorial fashion in a democracy. He understood that if governments attempted to act that way, there would be so much acrimony around this place that even the government wouldn't get its agenda through, no matter how tight the rules they make, no matter how serious they are about ending the debate in this place.

The member for Parry Sound knew what he was talking about. He knew what he was talking about in July 1992, and the comments he made at that time apply now as this government is attempting to ruin the —

**The Speaker:** The member for Wellington.

#### ARTHUR ECONOMY

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I have some exciting economic news I wish to share with the House. Musashi Seimitsu Industry Co Ltd of Japan announced last week its intention to open a new manufacturing plant in Arthur.

With a \$3-million investment, the company plans to employ 30 people when the plant begins operating in March 1998 and it plans to employ 100 in three years' time. The plant will provide automotive suspension parts for the Honda Canada manufacturing plant in Alliston.

Last week I had the privilege of joining Arthur village council and Mr Iwase of the company in an announcement ceremony to mark this good news.

I want to extend my congratulations to the village council and staff for their work in making Arthur a desirable place to do business and create new jobs. I'd also like to thank Mr Iwase, president of Technical Auto Parts Inc, Musashi Seimitsu's US subsidiary, for his part in selecting Arthur as the location for this new plant.

Mr Iwase's comments at the ceremony reflect my own beliefs that Wellington has many positive features to offer prospective businesses. He said that Arthur "has a skilled workforce, a good infrastructure and a high quality of life," and I couldn't agree more.

I am very encouraged by the brighter economic outlook for Ontario which our government has encouraged through its policies. However, our work is not over. Our focus as a government must continue to be on providing opportunities for new and existing businesses that create the new jobs we need.

As the MPP for Wellington and the parliamentary assistant for small business to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, I will continue to work with the minister and the government to do all we can to improve conditions for business investment and the creation of new jobs in Wellington and Ontario.

1340

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM RÉFORME DU RÈGLEMENT

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** The government is proceeding with rule changes that affect most dramatically the people of this province. I am reminded of the Bill 7 fiasco. You'll remember that. It



was the government's labour legislation. Politics aside, that legislation created problems that are happening at the Ontario Labour Relations Board now that'll take years to solve. Why? Because they jammed through hundreds of amendments without the opportunity to review them, talk about them or discuss them.

I'd like to remind the government, more important, the people of Ontario, that virtually every other democratic institution that derives from the British Parliament has at least one system of checks and balances, two legislative bodies to look at legislation, to study legislation, to discuss its impacts. Ontario doesn't have this. This government is jamming through rule changes that will affect people, will affect business people, will affect average citizens in negative and harmful ways because the only check will be what the government wants.

"Let's not discuss bills, let's not think them through, let's not have sober second thoughts. Let's simply proceed first and ask questions later." That may not — may not? — will not work in this province. It will not work anywhere. Ontario will be the only jurisdiction in the world where a government can get away with that kind of nonsense and still call itself democratic. Take back your rules. Let's make this House work in the interests of all the people of Ontario.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Encore une fois ce gouvernement se démontre comme gouvernement non démocratique, un gouvernement qui dit, «On veut avoir tout le pouvoir, toute la puissance, tout l'appui en arrière du Cabinet de la province afin de passer des lois,» sans respecter la responsabilité qu'ils ont comme gouvernement envers la démocratie de cette province.

Ils vont changer le Règlement de la Chambre. Pourquoi ? Pour exactement cette raison. Ils essaient de nous faire croire qu'ils veulent le faire parce que ça va mieux faire marcher la Chambre. Cela n'a rien à faire avec «faire marcher la Chambre». La Chambre devrait marcher pour le public de l'Ontario, et M. Harris et M. Eves et le reste de son Cabinet veulent que cette Chambre travaille seulement pour le Cabinet et non pour la population de l'Ontario.

On dit dans le Nouveau Parti démocratique qu'un gouvernement est élu pour une raison, et une seule raison : passer des lois pour tous les francophones, tous les anglophones, toutes les personnes de la province, et non seulement pour donner le pouvoir au Cabinet.

Ils vont avoir le droit, quand cette loi sera passée, de faire des changements massifs aux lois de la province qui vont affecter toutes les personnes de l'Ontario. Il y a quasiment rien qu'on peut faire comme membres de l'opposition ou même comme membres des arrière-bans après que le Règlement sera changé.

Je dis que ce gouvernement doit prendre garde, parce que la population de l'Ontario ne va pas accepter que le gouvernement de Mike Harris agisse comme une dictature et dise à la population de l'Ontario que ce n'est pas une démocratie. Je vous le dis.

#### COBOURG WATERFRONT FESTIVAL

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** July 1, Canada Day, is fast approaching. The UN has for the fourth time

chosen Canada as the best place in the world to live. We as Canadians have much to celebrate and to give thanks for on this very special day of July 1.

As a prelude to the festivities of Canada Day, I invite all members and their families to visit Cobourg's annual waterfront festival and join in the celebration of Canadian art, music and culture. This art show is absolutely second to none in Ontario. I can guarantee that the entertainment will be excellent, the people friendly and Cobourg's Heritage Harbour beautiful. The only thing I can't guarantee is that there will be sunshine for those days.

However, come rain or shine, this is indeed a top-quality Ontario festival which I know you and your family would certainly enjoy. So remember the Cobourg Waterfront Festival, June 28 through 30. It is a "must" visit. If you don't have plans for July 1, please join us in one of the many communities in Northumberland for the Canada Day celebration.

As I close, it is my pleasure to acknowledge the tremendous effort and commitment of organizers and volunteers who have made the Cobourg Waterfront Festival, the Canada Day celebrations and the Canada Day parades possible. I look forward to another celebration.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: For the last couple of days the government has come into this House and has tried to tell us that their proposed rule changes are based upon the federal Parliament. We have checked with the federal Parliament. They are in no way based upon the federal Parliament. Would the government please correct the record —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. To the leader of the third party, first, there wasn't a point of privilege. Second, I think I ruled with respect to buttons, pins, stickers and other paraphernalia. I would ask that you remove it at this time.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order from the government side, please.

**Mr Hampton:** No disrespect to you, Speaker, but I will not remove this. We cannot participate —

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Throw him out. He wants a long weekend.

**The Speaker:** Order, Minister of Agriculture.

Then you know I have no other option than to name the member for Rainy River, Mr Hampton.

*Mr Hampton was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Sault Ste Marie, I would ask that you remove the sticker, please.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** No disrespect to your position, Mr Speaker, but I cannot remove it either.

**The Speaker:** I then have no option but to name the member for Sault Ste Marie, Mr Martin.

*Mr Martin was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, I would ask that you remove that sticker, please.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** No disrespect to you, Speaker, but I will not remove the sticker.

**The Speaker:** Then I have no option but to name the member for Hamilton Centre, Mr Christopherson.

*Mr Christopherson was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Cochrane South, I ask that you remove that sticker, please.

**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Pas de manque de respect, Monsieur le Président, mais c'est une question de démocratie pour la Chambre et pour la population ontarienne, et je ne peux pas l'enlever.

**The Speaker:** Then I have no option but to name the member for Cochrane South, Mr Bisson.

*Mr Bisson was escorted from the chamber.*

1350

**The Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East, I ask you to remove that sticker, please.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Mr Speaker, with no disrespect to you, this government is operating in a completely anti-democratic fashion, and I will not live with it in this House.

**The Speaker:** I have no alternative then but to name the member for Sudbury East, Ms Martel.

*Ms Martel was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, I'd ask that you remove that sticker, please.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Speaker, I have the highest regard for you, and I also have the highest regard for democracy and the democratic traditions that take place in this House; this government has put them under direct attack.

**The Speaker:** Then I have no option but to name the member for Welland-Thorold, Mr Kormos.

*Mr Kormos was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Dovercourt, I would ask that you remove that sticker, please.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Speaker, with all due respect, the members opposite, the members of the government, think this is a light matter, think this is something to make light of. This is the only way —

**The Speaker:** I have no option but to name the member for Dovercourt, Mr Silipo.

*Mr Silipo was escorted from the chamber.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Algoma, I would ask that you remove that sticker, please.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** With the highest regard for you, Speaker, and respect for your office, because of the actions of this government with regard to unilateral rule changes and the threat to democracy in this province, I have no option but to protest on behalf of my constituents and the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Then I have no option but to name the member for Algoma, Mr Wildman.

*Mr Wildman was escorted from the chamber.*

#### CASE REPORTS, OMBUDSMAN

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the Ombudsman's case report in the matter of Mr H and the Ministry of Finance and Mr S and the Ministry of Health, pursuant to subsection 21(4) of the Ombudsman Act.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I have a question for the Deputy Premier. This is only the beginning. Over the last two years your government has faced an unprecedented number of public demonstrations and people opposed to your government. You've had to face protesters from all across this province from all walks of life. You've had to face people who were angry about Bill 26, parents, teachers, students, public service workers, injured workers and, most recently, the people of Metro Toronto, who overwhelmingly rejected your megacity.

What has your government's response been? It has been to dismiss and intimidate. Your approach is to deal quickly and severely with those who oppose you. When you change the rules to shut out opposition, you're not just shutting us out; you are making it virtually impossible for anyone who disagrees with you to be heard. Why are you afraid of anyone who disagrees with you? Why are you making it impossible for those people to be heard?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I have never been afraid of anybody who disagrees with me, nor is anybody in the government. It is commonplace in a democratic society for people to have the right to disagree and to have freedom in expression of their opinions.

**Mr Cordiano:** Do you not agree that these changes will severely limit debate? You'll be able to shove through law so quickly the public will have no time to react to it. Your plan will take away the right of teachers to strike in the future. That can be introduced on a Monday and by week's end it will be gone. It would make it possible to pass your plans to destroy rent control within a matter of days.

Legitimate concerns that people have, citizens from all walks of life — tenants, teachers, small business people, property taxpayers — they'll all lose their right to respond to what your government proposes. If you think you've seen a lot of protest now, wait until you take that democratic right to protest, to respond to your government's initiatives, away from those people. Why is it that you are taking the right to respond away from the people of this province in this assembly?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I'm sure if he thinks about it, and I'm sure even the member from Scarborough would agree, this place obviously hasn't been working too wonderfully in the last few months. If it had, the member from Scarborough wouldn't have felt inclined to take the extreme measure he took several months ago. A lot of the proposed rule changes the member will know come directly from our counterparts in Ottawa.

**Hon Mr Eves:** It is my understanding that the three House leaders had a meeting of some length last evening. Understandably, there are still some differences of opinion between and among the House leaders, but it is my hope that those discussions will continue and ultimately lead to some resolution of the matter.



**Mr Cordiano:** A few years ago this member stood in this House and said, "The only way opposition," including public opposition, "can be effectively dealt with...is through the...ability to debate, and yes, on occasion even stall or slow down progress of a bill." Those were your words, Minister.

Imagine, under your proposed changes the public would never have had the chance to look into the omnibus Bill 26 and you would never have been forced to make the more than 150 amendments that were made to that legislation. Your megacity law would have been rammed through without giving the public any chance whatsoever to respond. Democracy, I say to you and to members of the back bench in this government, just doesn't happen every four years. The public has a real right to respond and to be heard.

I ask you again: Why do you want to eliminate the public's right to respond legitimately? Why are you taking this right away from the people of this province? That's what you're doing when you try to shut off debate, when you try to shut down the opposition. You are —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, member for Lawrence.

**Hon Mr Eves:** That is not the purpose of seeking rule changes whatsoever. With respect to Bill 26, I happened to be the government House leader at the time and I can tell you that by the route you took the opposition parties ended up with less time in committee than was offered by myself — I know whereof I speak — in the first place. So for you to throw Bill 26 —

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** You didn't want to give any days.

**Hon Mr Eves:** That is absolutely inaccurate and not truthful — not accurate. I withdraw that, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

**Hon Mr Eves:** There is no doubt that both opposition parties were offered, with respect to Bill 26, hundreds more hours than you ended up with after your publicity stunt and the actions taken by the member from Scarborough.

1400

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is to the Treasurer, who I guess is the acting Premier today, the Deputy Premier of this province, Mr Eves, the member for Parry Sound. You are one of what I consider to be the moderates on the government benches today. Believe it or not, I consider you to be one of the moderates, which says something about the government benches.

You are in my view one of the more reasonable government members. You are a person who is aware of the important role that the opposition plays in the democratic process. You're not one of the mad dogs, you're not one of the people who believe this place is simply an impediment to the radical government agenda being implemented. You don't believe this place is a nuisance and you don't believe governments should move recklessly and with dispatch.

As a former House leader of the opposition, as a recent government House leader, as a man who understands

Parliament, as a person who respects democracy, will you now ask the Premier to withdraw these draconian and unnecessary rule changes and engage in a meaningful dialogue?

**Hon Mr Eves:** There is no doubt, that the ultimate and appropriate resolution in this matter would be discussion among the three House leaders. I have been, as you have pointed out, House leader in many capacities in this place and I have sat through minority parliaments and majority parliaments.

I can say to you that there have been rule changes proposed by your party when you were in government; there were rule changes proposed by the NDP when they were in government. The way all of those came to the forefront was by the government of the day presenting what it thought appropriate rule changes would be and by the opposition parties responding to the same. Ultimately, at the end of the day I think it's safe to say that nobody got everything they wanted but everybody got a little bit of something they wanted and the rules were changed and the place went on. I think that should be the ultimate resolution of the rules changes here.

**Mr Bradley:** The rule changes you have proposed through the Premier — because I know the Premier ultimately has to approve everything the government does — relegate question period to seventh place on the items to be dealt with by this House. This could result in either a shortened question period, a question period pushed way into the background or a question period cut off by another rule change which says government business must commence by 4 pm.

You know the effect of this. It cuts off what is most important to all of us in this House: the accountability session for the government where we ask the questions, you answer them and the public ultimately makes up its mind who is right and who should be re-elected.

Will the Deputy Premier now counsel the Premier and the government House leader to change the rules back to the way they are for question period, placing it in a prominent position and ensuring that there's accountability in this House?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I don't think anybody's talking about dramatically reducing the length of question period. I can say in all sincerity to the member for St Catharines, I know that he is a parliamentarian, I know that he's travelled to many different jurisdictions. He certainly I am sure has been to Parliament in Westminster where the Prime Minister of Great Britain stands up and makes himself available for all of about 20 minutes twice a week to answer questions.

He will also know that British Columbia has a 15-minute question period, he will know that the province of Saskatchewan has a 20-minute question period and he will know that the House of Commons in Ottawa has a 45-minute question period, none of which is being proposed by our House leader with respect to the proposed rule changes.

I think that you perhaps have taken some parliamentary licence here and exaggerated a little bit about the extent of the rule changes that are being proposed by the government House leader.



**Mr Bradley:** I want to say to the member that I think he would agree you can judge governments best by what they do when they think no one is looking or when they can get away with something. You know that members of the news media ordinarily don't cover rule changes. You know that the public is not particularly interested in them because there's not an understanding of the ramifications for everybody in the public. You know that you have 82 seats and that you can impose your will on this Legislature. Often you can judge people and people who are part of a government by those who have extreme power or tremendous power and do not choose to exercise it because they believe it is not right so to do.

I ask you today, as a parliamentarian, as an important person in this government, will you speak to the Premier? Will you request that the Premier withdraw this grenade which has been rolled into this chamber, that the Premier take away the gun which is held to the parliamentarians on the opposition side, scrap the motion which is before the House and begin anew a dialogue on the procedures of this Legislature?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I can recall a very similar situation when the NDP was in power. I believe Mr Cooke was the government House leader. He introduced a series of rule changes that both myself and Mr Elston, your House leader of the day, responded to. Neither one of us very much liked the initial package presented by Mr Cooke at that time, but we were able to come to some resolution of the matter, albeit not to your party's concurrence but to our party's concurrence, by realizing that (a) there were some things wrong with the rules that had to be changed, and (b) by negotiation among the three House leaders to come to an ultimate resolution of the proposed package, which are the standing orders that we have today.

Are they perfect? Absolutely not, obviously. This is an ongoing process. Rules change in various jurisdictions from time to time. I still say to the honourable member that the ultimate resolution of this matter should be by negotiation among the three House leaders.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Deputy Premier and it is on the House rules. For many of us, a symbol of how Mike Harris would like to run this Legislature was Bill 26, the omnibus bill. We called it the bully bill. That gave us a glimpse into how he really would like to run this place: shut the public out and ram a bill through like that.

As we look at these rules, we now find that — take that bill: A similar bill could be introduced at noon on a Monday and passed into law on Wednesday. In terms of ramming something through, the new rules would permit Mike Harris to have pushed through the omnibus bill, to introduce it on a Monday and it becomes law on Wednesday. Do you really believe that is in the public interest, for a government to have the right to ram a bill like that through in two days?

**Hon Mr Eves:** No, I don't. That wasn't what was done or proposed, quite frankly, with respect to Bill 26. That was not proposed with respect to Bill 26 at all. That isn't the process that occurred surrounding Bill 26.

Are there pieces of legislation from time to time when it would be necessary for a government to act swiftly?

Absolutely. Would it be my advice that a government should do something that's very substantial in nature, changing a major policy without consulting the public and doing it in a four-day period of time? Absolutely not, and I don't believe that's the intention.

**Mr Phillips:** I hope the public are as chilled by that answer as they should be. What you're saying is these rule changes would indeed permit you to ram through something like the omnibus bill, to introduce it on a Monday and bring it through on Wednesday. Now you're saying: "We would never do that. Trust us. We would never do that."

But I would just say to the public, if you'd never do it, don't give yourselves the power to do it. I think the public understands what Mike Harris is all about. I repeat, do you think the public want to give Mike Harris the authority to ram a bill through, to introduce it on Monday and it's law on Wednesday? If you don't think that should be given to him, why don't you today agree that you will take that part of the rules out immediately?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I think the honourable member from Scarborough-Agincourt has taken some of my comments out of context. I didn't say that any government, not just this government, would never want a bill passed in four days. I did go on to say that if there's some matter of substance and great public policy, a major policy initiative for change, obviously government is going to consult with the public.

The proposed standing orders being proposed by the government House leader, in many respects in some of these issues, are almost identical to those in the House of Commons in Ottawa. I don't hear the honourable member for Scarborough or members of his party petitioning the Prime Minister of Canada to change their standing orders. I don't hear him calling the Prime Minister of Canada an undemocratic or dictatorial person, and that's because he's not, and that's because they're not abused and they won't be abused here either.

I would say to the honourable member that if he has some constructive suggestions to make, he relay them to his House leader and the three House leaders negotiate an end to this matter.

1410

## TOURISM

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. I'd like to start by congratulating him for his hard work in promoting the province of Ontario. It's about time the people around the world started appreciating all the good things available here.

When you mention the city of Stratford, the first thing that comes to mind is the Stratford Shakespearean Festival. Through the hard work of the festival board and staff in the city of Stratford, the event is known worldwide.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** Last year the Stratford Festival attracted more than half a million people to the area. This year the festival is offering a total of 543 performances —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister?



**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** The member for Perth should be justifiably proud of his area for what it does to create opportunities in Ontario, particularly the Stratford Festival.

Last week I had the good fortune to travel the province with my parliamentary assistant, Mr Leo Jordan. Mr Jordan looks after tourism for me and does a wonderful job in that area. When we were doing our travels we had a chance to tell Ontarians that tourism is very important to this province. It creates in excess of 413,000 jobs.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** There are 66,000 businesses in the tourism industry and it is valued at \$13.6 billion and —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** For years I've heard that tourism is not a sustainable industry in areas like Perth county. I'm proud to say that through the hard work and dedication of the many, those dissenters have been proven wrong. This is not to say that the people of Perth county and especially the city of Stratford are satisfied. For years they've been frustrated by an industry and governments who would not allow them to expand. It would appear that this time the restriction is coming to an end.

I'd like to know what the major barriers were that halted the expansion of tourism in Ontario and what this government has done to reverse that trend.

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** In response to the supplementary, let me say that the key factor we found and that we had to act on was to remove the barriers to growth and expansion that had been put in place by the previous government, who are no longer here today. I'm sorry they're missing this.

Right now there is a very big spirit of enthusiasm and a can-do attitude throughout this province. In North Bay we had a chance to release our new resource-based tourism policy. In Sarnia we had a chance to attend the official opening of an impressive new marina addition. In Toronto we launched Tourism Awareness Week at the Eaton Centre, which is one of the biggest tourist attractions in the Toronto area.

We are so encouraged by what went on during Tourism Awareness Week that I am today announcing that Tourism Awareness Week will become an annual feature of this government and it will be supported by the private sector.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Sir, you and your government are taking away one of the major tools that will keep you, the government, or any government for that matter, accountable to the general public. You campaigned on a notion of open and honest government, but by your rule changes you are severely limiting the role of the individual members of this House, on both sides of the House.

Right now, rule 97, which is the rule that deals with questions on the order paper, states, "Questions seeking

information from the ministry relating to the public affairs of the province may be placed by notice on the Orders and Notices paper."

You are limiting that to four questions on the order paper by one individual member. Why, sir, are you attacking the democratic principles and practices that have operated in this province for well over 100 years?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I would say to the honourable member that if he has something to propose, the way to do that is by giving that to his House leader and his House leader suggesting it to the government House leader so those negotiations can continue.

It's my understanding the government House leader has moved on several of his proposed rule changes. It's my understanding he asked the opposition parties to make submissions and to contribute to the exercise. Before very recently, I understand the independent member for Elgin was the only member of the Legislature who bothered to contribute to the proposed rule changes. Now that, I understand, the three House leaders are talking on this issue, I ask you to raise that issue with your House leader and have him bring it to the attention of the government House leader.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You know quite well that's the only way for any member of the House to obtain legitimate answers to questions of any government department and you are limiting that, which has never been limited before.

Even the impartiality of the Speaker's office and the role the Speaker plays in this House is under attack under these rule changes. Right now, in rule 10(a), the government has to show when the House is adjourned that it's in the public interest, in the Speaker's mind, to call the House back. Why are you taking that right away from the Speaker and assuming that on to yourself? Why are you attacking the impartiality of whoever sits in the Speaker's chair in this House? Why are you attacking democracy that way, sir?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I say to the honourable member that if he has specific issues and specific proposed rule changes he doesn't agree with, then I would urge him, through his House leader, to communicate those to the government House leader.

He was alluding in his first question to a limitation on the number of questions that perhaps could be put on —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Four is too few.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Four is too few. Perhaps it would be interesting to know the Liberal Party's idea of what would be the appropriate amount. It's my understanding that one Liberal member tabled over 400 questions on the order paper in one week. Does he honestly feel that is not a frivolous —

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** What is the problem? What is it you don't want to tell us about?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Hold on.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It is public information.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Maybe it should be 4,000 them.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** New question, member for Scarborough Centre.

1420

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. During second reading debate, committee hearings and third reading debate on Bill 103, members of the Legislature and members of the public spoke about a coordinating body for the greater Toronto area; a Greater Toronto Services Board, they called it.

It's my understanding that Milt Farrow, a special adviser to your ministry, released a discussion paper this week on the creation of a Greater Toronto Services Board. Could you provide for me, my constituents of Scarborough Centre and all members of this Legislative Assembly details of Mr Farrow's announcement.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Is Milt Farrow still alive? He has survived more governments.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Mr Farrow is indeed very much alive, in response to the member for St Catharines, and he produced an excellent report called *Getting Together*. While preparing this report, Mr Farrow met with every council in Metropolitan Toronto, he met with every council and every municipality in the GTA. He has put forward a paper containing 33 reports, which we have now put out for public consultation. We're looking forward to responses from the public on how this report could be implemented, how it can be improved, whether there should be additional recommendations.

I encourage everyone who has an interest in better government in the greater Toronto area to read this report and provide input to the government. We will certainly listen to all the advice we get and we will ensure that comments made by the public are incorporated in what the final report is.

**Mr Newman:** I, along with all members of the Legislature, I think, regardless of their political stripe, recognize that there is a need for greater consolidation of service delivery within the GTA. Could you provide for me and all members of this House other examples that have recognized change for the coordination of services within the GTA?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I thank the member for his question, a very good question. I think everyone recognizes the need to coordinate services right throughout the GTA, services like garbage disposal, issues like economic development, issues like transit. All of those require coordination from Oshawa through to Hamilton. It's something that is sadly lacking at this point in time, and I know that the recommendations that have been made in Mr Farrow's report called *Getting Together* outline how that coordination could take place.

Again I would like to encourage everyone who has an interest in ensuring that governance in the greater Toronto area is formulated and introduced in an appropriate manner to ensure that the best government is provided to all the citizens of this area to read the report and provide us with comments. I encourage the opposition parties to do the same: provide us with their comments on how we can go about implementing the recommendations of this

report. I can assure you they will take all their comments into consideration.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Aren't your proposed rule changes all about trying to stomp out or get rid of any potential opposition, the kind we saw in the Bill 103 megacity debate, where the opposition combined with the public in questioning the complete takeover and eradication of local government? Isn't that what you're trying to do with these rule changes, ensure that type of opposition, with the public coming together, doesn't happen again? Because 76% of the people, when they found out what you're about to do, said no to your megacity, you're trying to get back at them and ensure it doesn't happen again.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The proposed rule changes have nothing to do with a specific piece of legislation or a specific issue. They are an attempt to update or modernize the standing orders, as happens in this place —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** How can you stand there and say that? That's not true.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. You can't say that.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I withdraw.

**Hon Mr Eves:** — and to bring them more in line with those standing orders that other provinces have and that indeed the House of Commons in Ottawa has.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I ask the member for Kingston and The Islands and the Minister of Municipal Affairs to come to order, please.

**Mr Colle:** If the public had not joined together with the opposition in speaking out against that megacity bill, if the public had not found out what was in it because the opposition asked questions, we would not even have had the referendum before the bill was passed. There would have been no time for that, because you were going to ram it through. There would have been no major amendments where the public told you they didn't want local government wiped away.

Why would you now change the rules so this could never happen again? At least you heard from the referendum, although you didn't pay attention, and there were major changes where there were community councils introduced. Don't you see the value of having the public find out what's in a bill, what's wrong with a bill, and the public having the ability to join the opposition in having the audacity to question your government?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The proposed rule changes, as I said to the honourable member, have nothing to do with a specific piece of legislation. I'm looking at the proposed standing order changes here now, and at least half of them come directly from the House of Commons in Ottawa.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Cherry-picked.

**Hon Mr Eves:** They are standing orders in the House of Commons in Ottawa, I say to the honourable member for St Catharines.



I understand that the two opposition parties may have some differing points of view on several of the proposed standing order changes, and I would encourage them to keep their negotiations open with the government House leader. I say to the honourable member, in the 16-plus years I've been here, every time the standing orders have been changed, they've been changed by the government of the day producing what it thought would be the appropriate standing orders and having the two opposition House leaders respond, and that's the same case today.

### CANADA SUMMER GAMES

**Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex):** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. On Tuesday you took part in an exciting announcement in London, which identified the London Alliance as the host group for the 2001 Canada Summer Games.

As you and I witnessed, this was certainly good news for London, and Londoners greeted it with great enthusiasm and optimism, as playing host to the country's finest athletes has been a long-time goal for the residents of our area. I certainly congratulate the London Alliance on their efforts to date.

As I mentioned, the announcement has been greeted very positively by residents and business alike. Could you explain to the House some of the benefits these games will bring to London when Ontario becomes the host province?

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** First of all, I thank the member for Middlesex for the question and would like to congratulate the London Alliance, made up of the communities of London, St Thomas, Grand Bend, Woodstock and the University of Western Ontario, for being selected as the host community for the 2001 Canada Summer Games.

These games will provide tremendous economic opportunities for the communities in and around London, with projected spinoff benefits of \$61 million and the creation of approximately 700 jobs over the next four years.

The government of Ontario will provide London's games organizing committee with \$3.1 million to host the 2001 Canada Summer Games. This figure is set out in the Canada games agreement, which is signed by the federal, the provincial and the territorial governments.

**Mr Smith:** On behalf of my colleagues from London North, London Centre, London South and Elgin, I would like to congratulate you on your role and the role your ministry played in the selection process. As you can appreciate, there's always a great deal of question around how the selection process works. Could you share with the House the new evaluation method created by your ministry which resulted in the selection of London as the host community for the 2001 Canada games?

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** For the first time ever, our ministry created an evaluation system that was based on a fair and open competitive bidding process. This resulted in nine Ontario communities expressing an interest in hosting the 2001 summer games. All bids were carefully reviewed and evaluated by my ministry staff, and the bids from Ottawa-Carleton, Niagara region and the London

Alliance were nominated to the federal Canada Games Council for examination beginning in December 1996.

On Tuesday, as the members of the London area are well aware, the alliance was selected as host community. However, I want to take this opportunity to express my congratulations to all involved from the communities of Ottawa and Niagara, as well as the six other Ontario communities. They're all to be congratulated.

1430

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question's for the Minister of Education. Minister, you're one of the people who's been very clear throughout your time as minister that you really have no patience with anything that might slow you down in ramming through your agenda. You've even said that consultation and stakeholders and "that stuff" is not for anybody who wants to bring real change. You've defined powerful acting: It's "the rate at which your intentions become reality." I'm sure that you're going to be very happy with rule changes that'll let you do whatever you want to do without any interference at all.

My question is, why do you want to have the power to push through your legislation by giving no notice and having virtually no debate, less than a week's debate? What legislation are you planning to ram through that way?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** In a chamber that's heard some silly questions, that's one of the sillier ones I've heard in two years. It's not only silly, the premise and the context of the question are simply wrong. This government and this minister have done an extraordinary amount of consultation, an extraordinary amount of time in the schools, out in the different communities of this province, listening to people about what they want for their children, for their students, for the future of the province.

We also have been involved in the most extensive consultation on secondary school reform ever undertaken in this province. The comments from the member opposite just do not represent the facts, the way things work with this government, the kinds of consultations we've had and the kinds of consultations this minister has been involved in. I hope you'll correct that context in your subsequent question.

**Mrs McLeod:** I would be happy to clarify the context. I was actually quoting the minister from his own speech, the minister's definition of powerful acting. I'd be more than happy to share the full transcript with him to refresh his memory. I'd refresh his memory in terms of his record on consultation, because his very first action as minister was to end the consultation that was to be done on school board amalgamation proposals across this province.

I'm concerned about what you're going to do next. I don't want to take the time to go over your past record; we know it too well. I want to know what you're going to do in relation, for example, to what your colleague the Minister of Labour has just done in taking away the rights, declaring war virtually on school board employees



who are not teachers. I know you are only too anxious to do the same thing to teachers. I know you've got legislation that will strip away teachers' rights just waiting to go and you would love to be able to bring that in and get it done fast, get it over and done in less than a week and avoid the messiness of the legitimate protest that would bring. Is that one of the bombs you're planning to drop on this Legislature in the next week or in August and force through?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Once again, that's about as silly a set of comments as I've heard in this chamber. The member opposite has demonstrated over the course of the last couple of years a concern about politics, a concern about how things look politically, but a lack of concern about the future of this province and the young people in it. I can say that's been demonstrated again in the kind of questioning that she's going down.

Yes, I have talked about the definition of empowering. Yes, that is the rate that someone's intentions become reality. This government is out working very hard to have the intention of parents in this province for their children be a reality. That's why we've been doing all the consultation that we've been doing. That's why we've done all the hard work that's gone on in the last couple of years to get a better school system for Ontario's students, so that they can outperform other students in other parts of Canada, because we think they should. If we have no patience, it's no patience for a system that doesn't deliver for our young people what they need to be successful in their lives. I hope we're always impatient about that.

### SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

**Mr Bill Grimmitt (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** My question is for the Minister of Education and Training as well. It has to do with the school board elections this fall. I've been asked by several people in my riding when the candidates for school board trustee will be able to register for the fall election and when they can start preparing their campaigns.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** In sharp contrast, that was an excellent question, one that was designed to inform the people of Ontario about a matter that's urgent and relevant to them.

Candidates for school board trustee have been eligible to register since April 1. They would register with their local clerk and they can begin fund-raising and preparing for their campaigns as of the time of their registration. That's already going on in parts of Ontario.

**Mr Grimmitt:** My supplementary relates to a similar issue. When will the ministry be dealing with the issue of trustee ward boundaries?

**Interjection:** Good question.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I want to say that I certainly agree with the members opposite in saying that is another great question, relevant to the people of Ontario, important for the democratic process and for electing trustees throughout Ontario.

There are local education improvement commissions that will be working along with the clerks at drawing the boundaries, making sure those boundaries represent the population base as they should. As in the past, we have

continued the historical base in Ontario in not determining from Queen's Park where those boundaries should be but letting local people decide the boundaries locally, solve those problems locally, because we believe that's the best way for that to be done. That is proceeding now.

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Deputy Premier. I guess I'm one of the ones who ask a lot of order paper questions and I don't apologize for that. Let me tell you, I ask the questions only after sending lots of correspondence to the minister responsible.

Let me zero in on one with regard to travel of Ministry of Northern Development and Mines staff from Sudbury to Toronto. I wrote the minister repeatedly on that and I got back the pat answer, "Thank you for your correspondence. We will give it to the minister as soon as we can," or some garbage like that.

Deputy Premier, will you please tell me why the people of Ontario, who should be able to access that material through order paper questions, are now going to be limited in the number their member can ask? How is that democratic?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The honourable member might want to ask Jean Chrétien the same thing, why there's a limit in Ottawa.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Eves:** Mr Speaker, I'm merely pointing out that the standing orders in the Ontario Legislature, as in many other legislatures or many other parliamentary jurisdictions, are obtained by some precedent in this place, by some tradition in this place; also by looking at the standing orders and parliamentary tradition in Ottawa and other jurisdictions as well.

If the honourable member feels that the proposed limit is too small, perhaps he could suggest an appropriate number that he thinks may be appropriate.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Deputy Premier, you have to understand, first of all, that I'm elected as a provincial member of provincial Parliament. I wouldn't ask Jean Chrétien because his rules are his and our chamber's rules are ours.

You're denying the opportunity for the people of Ontario to ask meaningful questions. If you oppose the right to question, then you oppose the people's opportunity to gain knowledge. If you limit the right to question, you limit the people's ability to gain knowledge, and that's not what democracy is all about.

Will you commit today, will you tell the House that by limiting order paper questions, which do not hinder in any way the process of democracy, you are limiting the right of democracy to the people of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Eves:** I don't have any problem with people asking questions. I think that's quite appropriate. I said that about half an hour ago. However, I think everybody would agree — perhaps he wouldn't; perhaps he thinks an individual member should be able to ask 4,000 or 40 questions a day. The reality is there has to be some point at which this simply becomes a political exercise, as



opposed to a legitimate request for information, which we would all agree the members of the public are entitled to share.

If he has some suggestions along these lines, I would suggest that he give them to his House leader and his House leader can take them to the negotiations with the other two House leaders, which is where it should be discussed.

1440

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** My question is for the Minister of Labour. I wonder if you could tell us about workplace health and safety. I know this is a concern throughout the province and I understand there has been some action taken regarding this particular issue in the Windsor area. I wonder if you're able to provide us with some details.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** As the member knows, our ministry has certainly indicated that a key priority is health and safety in this province. In order to ensure that we eliminate injury and illness and aim for zero tolerance for fatalities, our ministry has recently taken a very proactive approach to health and safety.

We recently targeted the Windsor area, specifically the south Sandwich township area. Six of our inspectors made 312 workplace visits and during that time we issued 825 orders. We are endeavouring to make sure the workplaces are as safe as they possibly can be in all parts of Ontario.

**Mr Doyle:** I wonder if you could further expand on this and tell us if there have been similar activities in other regions of the province.

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** Yes. I have been particularly concerned about the number of forklift truck accidents in the province, so recently in the Ottawa area there was a blitz, and unfortunately, again, our inspectors found that many of the forklift trucks were not being operated in the manner in which they should be. They were not mechanically fit. What happened was that 2,800 orders were issued.

It stresses the fact that our ministry is being proactive. We are no longer waiting until accidents happen. We are going to be going into the field; we are going to be inspecting workplaces and making sure they are as safe as they possibly can be.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question of the Solicitor General. Over the last little while, you have had carriage of two major pieces of legislation through this Legislature, one of those being Bill 84, a major revision to fire safety and fire prevention in Ontario.

This bill was first introduced October 16, 1996, and we just passed it last month, so we really had seven months to deal with this major piece of legislation. That means it's been out in the public domain, firefighters and other interested parties have had time to comment on it, and through that process you accepted some of the comments that were received. While it's not the bill we would have

liked to see, through this process we made a better bill. Do you think that seven months working on Bill 84 was good and valuable and that we should ensure we have that sort of time to deal with pieces of legislation such as this?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** Certainly I think the time spent on Bill 84 was productive and helpful to me, to the government, to all involved. I don't think you can make a blanket statement with respect to any other piece of legislation, though. You have to deal with each one on its individual merits.

**Mr Ramsay:** Since we really came out with a better bill, having seven months to do it — and I know the Harris government still has a broad agenda to implement in this Legislature — would you give us a commitment today that other pieces of major legislation that would be under your carriage would be given a similar time frame so we could work on improving that bill?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm not totally familiar with the rule change proposals, but as I understand them, one of the objectives is to provide all members of this House additional opportunities for input and debate and discussion. I think we should look at all elements of the proposals with respect to the advantages and opportunities they will indeed provide private members of this assembly, and the public as well, for additional input and additional opportunities for input.

#### COURT BACKLOG

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** My question is to the Attorney General. A few weeks ago I asked you a question relating to the backlog blitz in Newmarket. At that time my constituents were pleased to know that significant progress was being made. Could you inform the Legislature today of any further progress with regard to that blitz?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank the member for York-Mackenzie for the question. I'd like to inform the member that we have taken very significant steps to control the backlog of cases that has existed for a long time in Newmarket. I indicated in April that we had reduced the inventory of cases in Newmarket by 10.6% at that time.

I'm pleased to inform the Legislature that as of the middle of June we've reduced the number of cases in the backlog in Newmarket by 20%. We've opened two new blitz courts in Newmarket that are having a very direct impact on reducing the criminal backlog.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I can tell you that it now takes one to two months to get a trial date, down from 10 months previously, so we've made great inroads —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much. Supplementary.

**Mr Klees:** My constituents will be very happy to hear of the results you are achieving. This kind of backlog has been a systemic problem in our system. We'd be very interested to know exactly how you're achieving the kind of results that you are achieving. Could you elaborate for us? It's important for the people in my community to



know what exactly you're doing to ensure safety in our community.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** That's a very important question because it's something that the member for St Catharines has asked me.

We've dedicated \$2 million to the backlog blitz project. We've opened nine new courtrooms. We've dedicated six judges and two justices of the peace to the project and have assigned over 40 ministry staff to combat the backlog problem. We're working closely with police and the judiciary to find ways to combat the backlog. For example, since the beginning of January, disclosure of evidence to defence counsel has been made at first appearance and mandatory pre-trials are taking place, which mean defence and crown counsels have been able to resolve more cases earlier in the system.

The blitz courts are a first step in addressing the systemic problems of long-standing court backlogs. We're working to identify viable long-term solutions to prevent a buildup of cases in the future. Clearing the backlog will lead to more timely prosecutions, help get criminals off our streets and keep our neighbourhoods safe and secure. The blitz is succeeding.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Earlier today you alluded to the difficulty in the huge numbers of order paper questions. I too am one of the MPPs who ask many order paper questions, for one significant reason: Your ministers are never forthcoming with information that we need to do our job. Your own colleagues refuse to answer questions, refuse to take phone calls, refuse to reply to letters about very significant issues that have to do with our ridings or our roles as critics here in this House.

Minister, I would ask you sincerely to reconsider any limitation whatsoever on order paper questions, because it really is a necessary part of our job.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I say to the honourable member, I would encourage her to make an alternative proposal, through her House leader, to the government House leader.

I might want to say to this particular member, she talks about ministers of the crown not responding to constituency issues. I can recall about a year ago when she sent me a note about a constituent of hers. I looked into that issue and I resolved the issue to the satisfaction of your constituent and yourself. I think that is the appropriate course of conduct for every minister of the crown.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Then perhaps you can tell me that it's totally inappropriate to be limited by the Minister of Community and Social Services to a briefing for that huge ministry that lasts but one hour, where the political staff, at the end of the 59th minute, slam shut the book and say, "That's it; we've got to go," in the moments of introducing the most massive changes to Ontario welfare legislation; a Minister of Health who doesn't return phone calls, letters, who only calls because the Premier puts a gun to his head finally after two years in office, making the most significant change to my health community in Windsor.

I have highly relevant questions that we asked in order paper questions: What are the new licence fees? What are the new user fees? What are the new registration fees? These are all highly relevant to the workings of government. What cost to the taxpayer of Ontario? How can you stand today and tell me that if only we could have access to your ministers; we don't. This is one very viable way for us to do our job.

Minister, you, sir, in opposition said that these kinds of things being available to opposition members were critical.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for Durham East, come to order. It's question period. Statements come at the beginning.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** With the greatest of respect, I cannot direct them how to ask the questions, and I certainly can't direct you people how to answer them. Please.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Some of the questions the honourable member just raised are indeed very appropriate questions that deserve answers by ministers of the crown. I couldn't agree with her more on the issues she just raised with respect to order paper questions she has asked. The four or five she just rhymed off are all very appropriate questions, and they deserve a response by a minister of the crown.

#### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. I'm very pleased to share with the House today that the riding of Durham East was privileged to have you in our riding to commission the Internet connection at the Scugog Memorial Public Library. I want to thank you for taking that time out of your busy schedule. Minister, I'm wondering what your impression is of the community working together to create an Internet site connection.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** I thank the honourable member for Durham East for his excellent question. I know he has worked very well with his community to ensure strong library service in his constituency.

As a part of the Who Does What exercise, municipalities will be given greater flexibility to make decisions on the day-to-day operations of local libraries. But I must say that the government's continual role is to strengthen the library system by encouraging and supporting the kinds of initiatives and partnerships recently demonstrated by the New Interest connection at the Scugog Memorial Public Library. The local member is to be congratulated for his initiatives too.

#### CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

Deferred vote on the motion for concurrence in supply for the following ministry:

Ministry of Education and Training.

*The division bells rang from 1454 to 1459.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.



**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Baird, John R.	Hamick, Charles	Runciman, Robert W.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Bassett, Isabel	Johns, Helen	Saunderson, William
Beaubien, Marcel	Johnson, Bert	Shea, Derwyn
Boushy, Dave	Jordan, W. Leo	Smith, Bruce
Brown, Jim	Kells, Morley	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	Leach, Al	Tilson, David
Danford, Harry	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Doyle, Ed	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	McLean, Allan K.	Villeneuve, Noble
Eves, Ernie L.	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Froese, Tom	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	O'Toole, John	Young, Terence H.
Guzzo, Garry J.	Parker, John L.	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn	
Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Natural Resources. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Deferred vote on the order for concurrence in supply for the Office of Francophone Affairs. Same vote?

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 53; the nays are 16.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**PETITIONS****STANDING ORDERS REFORM**

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** My students from Queen of Peace School have left, but I'll send them a video.

A petition to stop the Harris government plan to kill debate in the Legislature:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram through legislation more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office and in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

To this petition I attached my signature and give it to the page from my riding, Christie Thomson.

**CHARITABLE GAMING**

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** It's with great pleasure that I'm here this afternoon to read into the record this petition from constituents of Beaches-Woodbine.

"To Premier Mike Harris, Minister William Saunderson and members of the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas Mike Harris during the 1995 election promised voters he would not allow any more casinos without holding a community referendum;

"Whereas Mike Harris's Conservative government of Ontario has designated the Beaches community as one of 36 new permanent charity casino sites without holding a referendum;

"Whereas Mike Harris says these permanent casinos are simply replacing roving charity casinos;

"Whereas roving charity casinos can only be set up for a maximum of three days, can't stay open all night, have no more than 30 tables and take a maximum bet of \$10. On the other hand, the new casinos are permanent, operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, with 40 tables, 150 video slot machines, and maximum bets of \$100;

"Whereas Mike Harris dismisses concerns, saying the total number of gaming days in Toronto won't change;

"Whereas the nature of gambling will change dramatically with the introduction of the highly addictive video slot machines and much higher dollar volume operations, it being evident by the government's estimate that the new permanent casinos will see about \$1 billion a year wagered;

"Whereas Mike Harris says the new permanent casinos will be safer and more accountable;

"Whereas at the Windsor casino extra law enforcement resources were provided by the province and the Harris government has made no such commitment for the new casino in the Beaches;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease any bids for the Beaches casino site, to fully consult with the community and not to force a casino site on the community against its wishes."

I proudly affix my signature as I am in complete agreement with my constituents.

#### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition signed on behalf of some 2,000 of my constituents, and a great many of those disabled people. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas a commercial building may be considered 'barrier free' when a disabled person has unobstructed access into the building and may receive all the services and conveniences that are available within the building to a person without a disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That legislation be passed requiring that all structurally renovated commercial buildings be made barrier free."

I affix my signature to the petition.

#### JUGEMENT DE LA COUR D'APPEL

##### COURT DECISION

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell):** J'ai ici une pétition concernant la forme de nudité qui se déroule en Ontario.

«À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

«Attendu que le jugement de la Cour d'appel a été en faveur de la dame qui ne portait pas de haut dans un endroit public ;

«Attendu que la majorité de la population de l'Ontario s'oppose à cette décision ;

«Attendu que cette décision est à l'encontre des valeurs morales et humaines de la majorité des résidents et résidentes de l'Ontario ;

«Nous, les soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

«Que le premier ministre de l'Ontario apporte un projet de loi qui interdit la nudité du haut du corps des femmes dans des endroits publics et qui spécifie des lignes de conduite pour les endroits désignés privés.»

J'y ajoute ma signature.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My petition will be very brief:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the legislative authority to restrict going topless in public places; and

"Whereas sections 173 and 174 of the Criminal Code relating to public nudity be clarified to provide better protection of community standards;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the province of Ontario to continue to urge the government of Canada to clarify the legislation on going topless in public places."

Many of my constituents have called on this. I'm pleased to put my signature and attach it to that.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature to it.

1510

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have a petition which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas this government's contribution to prevention services made through the WCB has been reduced from \$62 million to \$47 million, with no explanation as to where this money has gone;



"Whereas the prevention services that the Ministry of Labour once provided are being offloaded to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and other safety associations, thereby increasing the demand for the prevention services provided by the centre;

"Whereas the government has gutted the certification training standard for health and safety committee members, replacing them with minimalist performance standards which, in combination with funding cuts, has resulted in a 40% reduction in the staff of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre is facing further cuts of \$2.3 million to finance the establishment of several new employer safety associations, thereby duplicating administrative costs and services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the gutting of the funding of prevention services provided by the Workers' Health and Safety Centre;

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the moneys taken from the health and safety prevention services of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the other safety associations be returned to them."

I affix my signature to this.

#### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by 207 parents from the Huron Street Public School in my riding.

"Whereas an excellent educational system is required for the wellbeing of our children now and for the wellbeing of Ontario in future;

"Whereas funding for education has been substantially reduced in the past several years;

"Whereas reduced funding has already forced an increase in class size at the Huron Street Public School;

"Whereas any further cutbacks would entail elimination of vital programs such as ESL, music and art, as well as further increases in class sizes to levels which would seriously impair the quality of instruction;

"Whereas in the haste to find quick solutions, the government is failing to appreciate the complexities of the educational system;

"We, the undersigned parents and guardians of students at Huron Street Public School, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"In the quest for fiscal responsibility, not to harm the educational experience of children in the public school system, and in particular, not to implement further cutbacks in educational spending."

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly,

creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Harris government now wishes to change the rules for the Ontario Legislature which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislature who are accountable to the people who elect them and instead, concentrate power in the Premier's office and in the hands of people who are not elected;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I am signing my signature.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Minister of Labour has begun a process to fundamentally alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations with the release of the discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;

"Whereas these changes threaten to deregulate the health and safety protection for workers and reduce or eliminate the rights of workers and joint health and safety committees;

"Whereas the ministry intentionally organized meetings in a manner which allowed only marginal opportunity for workers to discuss with the ministry the issues raised in the discussion paper;

"Whereas workers deserve a full opportunity to be heard regarding the proposals that threaten the legislated provisions that provide them with protection from workplace injury, illness and death;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose the deregulation of workplace health and safety and any erosion of the protection provided workers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that province-wide public hearings be held once any amendments to the act are introduced."

I sign my name to this petition.

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I'm doing this petition on behalf of the member for Nipissing, for whom I am the parliamentary assistant.

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas black bear populations in Ontario are healthy, with between 75,000 and 100,000 animals, and their numbers are stable or increasing in many areas of the province; and

"Whereas black bear hunting is enjoyed by over 20,000 hunters annually in Ontario and black bears are a well-managed, renewable resource; and

"Whereas bear hunting replaces natural mortality and reduces cannibalism among bears; and

"Whereas hunting regulations are based on sustained yield principles and all forms of hunting are needed to optimize the socioeconomic benefits associated with hunting; and

"Whereas the value of the spring bear hunt to tourist operators in northern Ontario is \$30 million annually, generating about 500 person-years of employment; and

"Whereas animal rights activists have launched a campaign of misinformation and emotional rhetoric to ban bear hunting and end our hunting heritage in Ontario, ignoring the enormous impact this would have on the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government protect our hunting heritage and continue to support all current forms of black bear hunting."

#### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas section 30, subsection (5) of the Education Act provides for dispositions with regard to habitually absent students and therein makes reference to the Juvenile Delinquents Act (Canada); and

"Whereas reference to the Juvenile Delinquents Act has caused and continues to cause confusion throughout the courts of Ontario because of its interpretive nature; and

"Whereas different interpretations of the Juvenile Delinquents Act have caused and continue to be inconsistent with rulings throughout the courts of Ontario; and

"Whereas the inconsistent support and enforcement of the compulsory school attendance legislation threatens the very concept of compulsory school attendance;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To resolve this long-outstanding problem for the educational future of Ontario's youth and restate the government's support of compulsory school attendance by clarifying the existing legislative confusion, by the deletion of any reference to the Juvenile Delinquents Act and by a clear adoption of the remedies available under the Provincial Offences Act."

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia):** I have a petition signed by approximately 1,000 persons.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, support our OPP, especially Sergeant Deane, in their testimony and actions taken at Ipperwash park; and

"We believe all of the OPP acted properly in their line of duty."

#### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition on secondary school reform in Ontario and it reads as follows:

"We believe that the heart of education in our province is the relationship between student and teacher and that the human and relational dimension should be maintained and extended in any proposed reform. As Minister of Education and Training, you should know how strongly we oppose many of the secondary school reform recommendations being proposed by your ministry and government.

"We recognize and support the need to review secondary education in Ontario. The proposal for reform as put forward by the ministry is substantially flawed in several key areas: (a) reduced instructional time, (b) reduction of instruction in English, (c) reduction of qualified teaching personnel, (d) academic work experience credit not linked to education curriculum, and (e) devaluation of formal education.

"We strongly urge your ministry to delay the implementation of secondary school reform so that all interested stakeholders — parents, students, school councils, trustees and teachers — are able to participate in a more meaningful consultation process which will help ensure that a high quality of publicly funded education is provided."

I am signing my name to this document.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### JAPANESE CANADIAN CULTURAL CENTRE ACT, 1997

Mr Turnbull moved first reading of Bill Pr84, An Act respecting the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House this motion carry? It is carried.

*Report continues in volume B.*



**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Dave Boushy, Robert Chiarelli, David Christopherson,  
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David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross,  
Bob Wood, Terence H. Young  
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Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle,  
Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy,  
Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Thursday 19 June 1997

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Jeudi 19 juin 1997

Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 juin 1997

*Report continued from volume A.*

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### JOB GROWTH AND TAX REDUCTION ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CROISSANCE DE L'EMPLOI ET LA RÉDUCTION DES IMPÔTS

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 129, An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget / Projet de loi 129, Loi visant à stimuler la croissance de l'emploi, à réduire les impôts et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1997.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It is with pleasure that I resume the debate on what we now know as the Tory Incompetence in Government Act, to talk about all the bungling they're having to go through in order to implement their flawed fiscal agenda.

We spoke last night about how this bill includes in it provisions, for example, around the Liquor Licence Act, to increase fines, but what isn't talked about is the reason for that. Most of the liquor licensing and monitoring responsibilities will be diluted, like liquor in some bad speakeasy, because there will be no inspectors available because they're being given responsibility to monitor the gambling that the government has decided to bring into this province, almost a tripling of gambling activities.

Each of the members in the government will have on the counters of bars and restaurants in their communities video gambling machines, which are purportedly going to be controlled away from minors, to keep down the addiction rate which has been so disastrous in other jurisdictions that have taken on these video gambling machines. Here we have in this measure today, this bill, a very weak attempt, an example of the incompetence of this government in trying to make up for the way that those inspectors are going to have to be spread out across the province dealing with these new gambling machines which they're going to force on everyone.

In relation to that, we saw the headlines today about how municipalities get to vote on gambling in their communities. What they didn't tell you — as so often this government can't afford or doesn't seem to have the capacity to talk straight to the voters — is that in reality most of the gambling that's going to be inflicted upon the communities in this province won't be subject to any local control whatsoever.

We'll see gambling machines in every bar and every restaurant that's licensed and we'll see the gambling centres — they're calling them charity gambling centres, but they really are mini-casinos, and nobody gets a vote on that. In fact local bylaws don't have any control over how much of that is done. Why has this large expansion of gambling become necessary? Solely and exclusively because this is a government that can't balance the numbers, that can't get its books straight and has to depend instead on the last resort, the most cowardly way for any government to bring in its revenues. That's expanded gambling, exploitation of its most vulnerable.

It bears repeating again what this government had to resort to, just how badly it has its affairs in order, when it had to try and tax seniors on drugs. After 20 years of free drugs for seniors, something that many of them had planned their retirement around — they have bad health; they knew that expenditure would be there; it has been there for 20 years and they couldn't imagine that this government would stoop so low as to tax seniors. But they did it; they taxed seniors: \$100 deductibles, \$6 at a time. We are aware of seniors paying \$1,000, \$2,000 a year in a tax on drugs, thanks to the members opposite, thanks to their lack of consideration for the travails of seniors.

That \$170 million last year and another \$55 million this year have been cut from the drug program. So we have a government that has cut money from the drug program and made up for it directly from the pockets of seniors. That's a significant development in the life of this province, because it talks about a government prepared to pick on vulnerable people, a government prepared to go what it thinks is the most politically easy route, showing us its character.

That was compounded. This government stooped even lower than we imagined it could possibly do when this government took it upon themselves to tax seniors twice in an eight-and-a-half-month period. They charged seniors a second \$100 deductible just eight and a half months after the first one was imposed.

You would think, with 80 members on the opposite side of the House, somebody on that side of the House would recognize how patently unfair this was to seniors, how unnecessary it would be to go to the aged people in this province, people who contributed their whole lives, to make up for the foibles of this government, for their inability to make their phoney tax cut work. Instead, we didn't hear a peep. We didn't hear one member opposite stand up and say that seniors were getting a raw deal.

Can you believe it took 71 days, with 972,000 seniors getting double-taxed by this government, harmed by this government, as many of them chose to put off important medications, chose not to get the help they needed,



because this government had the recklessness to not even pay attention when told when those effects were taking place?

After 71 days, and only after the seniors of this province banded together and gave this government an ultimatum — they recognized the only way you deal with a bully government is to try and bully back. So seniors said to the member for Nepean, to the members opposite, "You might think you can get away with double-taxing seniors, but we aren't going to let you." With some help from the Liberal caucus, seniors made their point, and after some embarrassment this government finally backed down and is giving a four-month credit to seniors and is prorating them for the amount of money that had been taxed on drugs. That should have been done in the first place. There's nothing that seniors in this province have to be thankful for, because this has been borne out of their quality of life.

We see the character of this government revealed so very clearly in measures like that. When we're being asked today to look at the various measures, we see a government that simply can't add, that can't get its books straight, can't get its legislation straight.

We're being told unless this bill passes July 1, 1996, all the trust corporations in the province go out of business. So we see a government that couldn't order its business to prevent that risk from being put forward to this Legislature. It's typical. It's the kind of thing we've come to expect: the government slopping around, trying to find ways to deal with its own agenda.

We see also what we might want to term the Bre-X amendment. The government finally stopped taking money from the securities commission, soaking that up for its own purposes, and is now allowing the Ontario Securities Commission to get on with doing its job. It comes a little too late for the people who invested in Bre-X.

1530

We see the centrepiece — I guess some of the members opposite consider it the crown jewel, but it really turns out for most of the people in this province to be a bag of garbage — which is the tax cut. We're being asked in this bill to approve the tax on income being reduced primarily for people who are well off in this province. Nobody could argue against reducing tax burdens in and of themselves, but to do so recklessly, to do so irresponsibly, to do so at the direct harm — not just the consequence but the harm — of people in this province is what many, many people here are starting to recognize. Every dollar, so-called, that they receive is costing them \$3 in extra money that they have to borrow, the services they're losing and the kinds of user fees they're going to have to pay. Many people, including seniors, did not vote for a government to impose user fees as a way of providing this phoney tax cut, a tax cut that cannot be supported by the economics of the government today.

Ironically, in this bill we are being asked to borrow on behalf of the people of Ontario \$7.5 billion for the continued operations of this government. That government is, ironically of course, a government with a Reform agenda but an NDP credit rating. Unfortunately three of

the major credit rating houses have said to this government, "We've evaluated your plans, we've looked at your phoney tax cut, we've looked at how they can't be balanced, and we're going to give you on that side of the House, with all your rhetoric" — at least the NDP were honest enough to say where they were making their tradeoffs. But on this side of House, with the usury of this government on behalf of a small number of people who will benefit, of all people the credit watch houses have said to you: "You deserve exactly the same rating. You haven't improved the fiscal stability of this province one bit."

I think it's interesting for people to know how well this looks on this particular government. They are going to borrow \$7.5 billion, and approximately \$3 billion of that is going to be for the tax cut, is going to be simply for the misguided outlook this government has as it relates to fiscal affairs.

It is really significant, I think, that so many people in the province are now starting to realize how very much this was a comic book agenda. This wasn't a Common Sense Revolution, it was a comic book revolution, 21 pages with pictures: no details, no plans, no idea how to go about the complicated affairs of trying to bring order to this province. Instead, we have a government mired in confusion. We have a government that cannot get its most basic affairs in order, that sees us having this tax cut at the expense of a tremendous number of people.

I want to turn briefly to the affairs of people who are the most vulnerable: people who are sick in this province, people who depend on hospitals. What could they come to expect in this budget from the government? Could they perhaps look to a government to review its affairs and to make a determination about whether or not its decision in December 1995 to slash all the hospitals in this province — every single member sitting opposite has had their hospitals cut, has had money taken away from essential care for patients. Every single one. There are two hospitals in the province, in York region, that ended up with more money. Every other one has lost money, has lost the ability to provide for people.

The budget, shamefully — and this unfortunately again relates to something more fundamental than the numbers; it talks to the character of this government. This government tried to advertise the idea that it was increasing health funding. When we brought the health budget, kicking and screaming, into the estimates committee, what did we find? We found that last year \$400 million of so-called expenditures was nothing but an accounting change. It's the kind of thing that patients who have had to lie on gurneys for hours on end in emergency rooms across this province have come to understand, that this government is not managing the affairs of this province adequately. It is not putting the money where it belongs.

In taking \$365 million away from hospitals last year, in taking \$435 million away from hospitals this fiscal year, that \$800 million is a tax on the sick, a deduction away from the quality of life. This government doesn't even have the pride of place to say, "We're doing this for some particularly good reason." Instead, it tries an accounting entry at the end of the year to try and fool us that something else has happened for hospitals.



Hospitals have always had a holdback payment every year, and when the government saw itself slipping below the level it committed to in the comic book revolution, it put in \$400 million that would have been paid to the hospitals within a couple of weeks of the end of the fiscal year. Instead, it had that accounted for during the fiscal year. But it meant that not 10 cents was available to hospitals to improve what they were doing. It is sad. It is difficult to understand the calculations of a government that can't see beyond the numbers.

We tried again in committee to speak to the Minister of Health, hoping he might have some level of influence on the bean counters in the Premier's office and in the Minister of Finance's office, that he might be able to adequately represent these very serious concerns. Instead, what we received back was what I can only term a shock for the citizens of Peterborough, for a family that was deeply affected by a situation that existed there.

Instead of dealing with the reductions in patient care which all the health professionals in this province agree are occurring — in fact, we have the College of Physicians and Surgeons in this province having to deal with the situation of physicians being held accountable for the quality of service to their patients, for situations they can't control. They want something done by a hospital, but that system, thanks to the Harris hospital cuts, won't provide those services. That doctor is under the responsibility to do the best for their patient, but it's being taken away from them. In fact, there's a court case now holding a doctor accountable not for what they did on their own, not for the kinds of things they could control, but instead being held accountable for where their patient arrived on a waiting list for cardiac surgery, a waiting list made necessary by the cuts of this government.

The situation in Peterborough was unfortunately an even stronger indication of a government that has completely lost its way, a government unable to acknowledge the reality which has happened probably more quickly for this government than any other that we've seen in the recent history of Ontario. When confronted with the situation, all the Minister of Health needed to say was: "There's a problem here. We want to fix it. We want to work with the people who are involved. We want to do something about this. We do not want 20 or 30 people to be in the emergency rooms of our hospitals in this province in 1997. We don't consider it acceptable that one of those people, a Mr Whitehill, should die in those circumstances, that he should be found dead by a family member." That's all the Minister of Health needed to say, and then to follow up with some actions.

Instead, to the shock of that family, to the discouragement of that family, to the apprehension of the staff at the Peterborough Civic Hospital, the minister decided to create a story about him sitting at home, watching on television, seeing the stretchers in the hallway, and deciding on his own that that was a stunt put upon the people of Peterborough, upon this particular individual and his family, upon the media and upon the government by the staff, the nurses and doctors of that hospital. That is a heinous allegation that occurred more than a week ago, and this minister has yet to provide one scintilla of

evidence for its veracity. There is no basis to believe that should in any way be given any credence.

What it shows is a certain level of desperateness which is reflected in this bill, Mr Speaker, I think you would agree, if you were looking at it. There's a level of desperateness there, a desperateness that doesn't acknowledge the reality of what this government's agenda is about. We can have problems in our hospital system that not only are not dealt with by this government, but instead are explained away by blaming some of the very people who are affected. It's not only unacceptable, it's beyond what is reasonable for the public to have from a government of whatever stripe in this House. It again shows us that this Reform government, with their NDP tax credit rating, just has no —

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is an important issue and we do not have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would you check for a quorum, please.

**Acting Clerk at the Table (Mr Douglas Arnott):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for York South.

1540

**Mr Kennedy:** I'm happy to resume to talk about how poorly this government is able to relate to the health concerns of the people in this province, the simple inability of its representatives of the people, the individual members of the government, the Ministry of Health, and ultimately where the responsibility belongs, with the Treasurer and the Premier's office, to recognize how damaging are the cuts they've made in health care.

We spoke earlier about seniors, about the drug cuts of \$175 million that have been made by this government. We spoke yesterday in estimates committee with the parliamentary assistant, Mr Newman, who refused to table the government's own estimates of what exactly has been reinvested. But it turns out that it's not necessary, because the estimates process, which thankfully is one of the things this government hasn't tried to change, hasn't tried to obfuscate, is very revealing. The estimates book available now to the public, and put on the agenda of the estimates committee by our party, tells the public very clearly the variance between reality and what actually is being said by this government.

We find, for example, a government that has trumpeted using public funds in the order of \$1 million — we understand it could be as high as \$6 million for all the ministries involved — to advertise what it's doing in terms of health care, to talk about reinvestment, to talk about money it's putting back in the system. The estimates book makes absolutely clear — and I challenge all the members opposite, in case they believe it should only be left to the minister and the parliamentary assistant, to prove there has been an amount of money put back in the system that is equivalent to the money taken out, because the estimates show a deficit of \$300 million that has been cut from this system, from hospitals. It goes higher if we



include the cuts from drugs, but from hospitals alone versus the amount of money put back in there's a \$300-million deficit, and that \$300 million is illustrative; it's the kind of money this government considers okay to take away from seniors but not okay to give back to the hospital system.

We see all across this province tragedies emerging, people on waiting lists, people having difficulty, people having tremendous concern about their own situations and those of their families. It's a new situation. We did not have these gurneys in the hallways before this government. We did not have that number; we did not have that kind of problem.

While the quorum was being established we had a discussion with one of the members and the honourable member tried to assert that hospitals were doing well in Peel region, for example. In point of fact, we have hospitals in Peel and other parts of the province running deficits, deficit-financed hospitals having to cover over for what's happening in this province.

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** In Peel?

**Mr Kennedy:** Absolutely. "In Peel?" asks the surprised member opposite. It again goes to show, just like the minister, there is a difficulty on the part of this government as a whole in getting in touch with what exactly is happening. It is extremely problematic.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** What's the hospital's name in Peel?

**Mr Kennedy:** Pardon me, Mr Speaker, but the member opposite is asking whether it is indeed a real hospital. Peel Memorial has had to deal with a tremendous amount of pressure on its budget, a tremendous number of cuts, a single hospital serving 300,000 people, unrecognized by this government, and we don't have a growth formula.

We heard again, as we try to put, as is our job as long as the government doesn't totally circumscribe our ability to do so — in estimates we established that there have been cuts to hospitals, cuts to the drug program, and the money put back in simply doesn't match. The minister instead has told us about \$1 billion. Last year, \$262 million was all that made its way back into the system.

On March 28 last year, on behalf of the government, the Minister of Health stood up and said — this is 1996, I'll remind you — \$170 million, a massive amount of money, is going to find its way into long-term care. Do you know what the actual spending was on long-term care? The spending on long-term care in the last fiscal year was \$750,000 less than the year before, and hidden away, \$33 million for expansion of long-term care had actually been cut the year before by this government; and the only answer, the weakest answer imaginable that we could get on behalf of the 17,000 people, elderly people, people with long-term-care needs in terms of their health, people who are waiting for long-term-care facilities, the best answer we could get from the minister, from his deputy, from his parliamentary assistant was that somehow the communities didn't respond. "The money was there, but it's their problem." That's the abdication of responsibility the people of Ontario are starting to recognize as the signature of this government, an inability to come to terms with reality, and it's reflected in the

kind of fudging we have taking place with regard to the fiscal capacities of this province.

We saw again in health a discussion about a reinvestment fund, a restructuring fund that would help the province get to a new age of hospitals, and in the budget it sat there as \$1.3 billion. It looked like a lot of money, but the estimates in this blue book say how much money is actually going to be spent, \$1.3 billion promised — trees fell to create the press releases, to create the propaganda, to do all that kind of thing, money was spent on television ads — and the reality is that only 17% of that money, 17 cents on the dollar, is going to find its way into the system this year. Now, 17% might be the level of credibility we could ascribe to the government, because it simply is unable, and perhaps fatally constitutionally unable, to follow through to match the rhetoric it has put in front of us as part of its program.

We see that this isn't just a perspective derived from people who have access to the estimates briefing book. The Ontario Medical Association itself says that there is no increase in health funding. Boris Kralj, who is a PhD in their department of economics, says that per capita health spending continues to decline because — as is so often unfortunately the case for this government; I guess it's the allure of Queen's Park that deducts some of that ability to smell the fresh air and tell what the real world is — people are getting older. There is an aging population. We've had instead our spending on health declining from \$1,270 per person to around \$1,100 per person.

That's the kind of thing that has been managed, and as we've already said, it's not just a question of numbers. It's the inability of this government to relate the numbers on the page, to relate the tax cut to the harm it is causing. That will probably be its fatal flaw. It's this inability of its back bench to talk about what's happening in terms of cuts to their own community, to the hospitals that are being closed in Port Colborne, in Fort Erie and in Grimsby, to the threats that were put on there, to the threat to the hospitals in Waterloo, to the closure of fundamentally good hospitals like the Riverside and Women's College, the Wellesley and the Doctors when we ask them to go beyond the numbers. We said to this government: "Provide us with some evidence that you know what you're doing, give some assurance to the people of this province, because it's what they want, particularly in respect of health care. Give us some idea. Will there be policies?"

The people of Grimsby came out 7,000-strong, 2,000 or 3,000 in Port Colborne, 7,800 letters from the people of Walkerton. When faced with that kind of threat the bully backs down and we now may have a small and rural policy. What we won't have is a policy for women's health in this province. What we won't have is a policy to deal with francophone health. Here we have a government of the most populous and economically powerful province of this country unable to rise to the occasion, unable to take in its own hands its portion of responsibility for national unity, unable to recognize that the Montfort has implications. Today the Franco-Manitobans came out and said: "We need Montfort. We need a hospital where French is the first language to train our people to sustain the French back in that province." But



the government has washed their hands of those kinds of responsibilities. They've said: "We can't deal with that. We've given it away to an unelected commission, to the Health Services Restructuring Commission."

On behalf of the people of Ontario we pressured the minister to admit, and he finally has admitted, that it is by choice that this exists, because the power to deal with hospitals, the power to close, the power to reduce their budgets, the power to change the way they function, whether they have emergency services to offer, is in the minister's hands. The minister had to agree the law is clear that he has the power. If the Wellesley Hospital closes and AIDS patients don't get service that is as good, it will be the Harris government's fault. If Women's College closes and women in this province don't get served as well, it will be because the Harris government, faced with its responsibility, meets its limitations, is unable to acknowledge reality.

1550

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mrs Boyd:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the member for York South and to say to him that he is very right to identify quite clearly the impact of the tax cuts involved in this bill on the services and the service providers and those who access the services of not only the health care system but all of the public services that we have.

There is no question at all but that the all-fired determination of this government to insist upon the tax cut as the only means of triggering economic growth is causing extreme pain to those who require the services that we've developed over many years in this province.

The member talks about the closure of hospitals and what the impact of that is on communities. One of the issues that we've been dealing with at the health estimates, as he pointed out, is what the impact is of the dollar decisions that this government is making. Again and again in those estimates we pointed out that there was line after line after line of the health budget that was underspent from the estimates of last year. Those underspent areas most often involved the vital community-based services in mental health, in health prevention and promotion that we require to turn a system around, a system that's been focused on illness rather than on health.

He is quite right that the decisions that have been made around the money in the health system have focused those dollars on exactly those people who benefit most from our tax dollars — the physicians. Those who are going to have the highest tax benefit also cost the most to the system.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I think when a member stands in this place and talks about all the closings and all the cutbacks and all the impact that has on health care in this province, they really have to be very careful to be accurate because, whether we like to admit it or not, people do watch the legislative channel. It's unfortunate that sometimes the information that is put on that channel can cause some concern to the public. It's important to reconfirm the fact that the previous two governments closed 9,000 hospital beds in this province. Frankly, we agreed with that because that is the best kind

of planning. If there were 9,000 hospital beds in this province that were not being utilized, it made sense not to keep them open.

But really, when you think about the extension of that, how could you close 9,000 hospital beds without closing one single hospital? That meant you kept all these buildings open with closed beds, mothballed wings, and the impact is that you still heat, clean, administer, cool in the summer; all the maintenance of that building continues. But in fact, 43 hospitals are in Toronto. If somebody can defend 43 hospitals in Toronto, I would like to hear it.

The point is, I'm really pleased that we're making the kinds of decisions that we are in health care because we are finally prioritizing and reinvesting the dollars where they need to be spent.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Let me just start off by saying to the member opposite, ask the people of Ontario whether they're satisfied with the kind of health care —

**The Acting Speaker:** Respond to the debate by your own member.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I am responding to that. Ask the people of Ontario whether they're happy with the kind of health care restructuring that you're doing.

This is all related of course to the first item that's contained in this bill, and that's the tax cut. That's what this is about. What we're saying is that your tax cut is being funded with the kind of idiotic, nonsensical cuts that you're making to the health care system, as has been so ably illustrated by the member for York South.

There's another very interesting item that has not been talked about in this House at all that's contained in this document, and that's the land transfer tax. For some reason, this government has decided to eliminate the 20% rate of land transfer tax that's being paid by foreigners who want to buy either farm land or agricultural land and recreational land in this province. It's a policy that has been in existence since 1974 that was brought in by an enlightened Conservative government rather than the Reform group that we have in here now.

I would like to hear from a government member or a government minister to stand in their place and to tell the people of Ontario that they are no longer concerned as a result of the action that they're taking in this bill, that they are no longer concerned about foreigners buying up our vacant land, our farm land, our recreational property. There was a concern at one time. Why don't they come right out and say that they no longer care about that, because that is the result of the action that you're taking in this particular bill. You're shaking your head no. Why are you changing that? You're changing that because you don't care whether the foreigners own the property and the land in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for York South has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Kennedy:** I appreciate the comments of my colleagues. It is of course sad, though. We believe that there are good and honourable people on the other side of the House. We want to see expressions of that in this House. It is a critical time for the people of this province. When we see these overarching, unreasonable obsessions



with tax cuts for a limited number putting at risk the quality of life that has been developed for the vast majority of people in this province it is indeed sad that we can't persuade the members opposite to stand up against that.

We see instead the increase in gambling. We see instead the cuts to seniors, the cuts to health care. We have heard from some members the importance of taking care, and there we can concur. But as we saw from a number of members participating in the estimates committee, none of them had the figures, none of them are being told. The singular question is: Why aren't they finding out? Why aren't they understanding that there's a huge difference between \$1 billion in promises and \$200 million in real spending, that people hurt when those things don't happen on the part of the government, when you tell people that mental health community services will be improved because we're closing psychiatric beds and at the end of the year not one cent of that \$25 million has been spent, not one dime?

When you kick people out of hospitals quicker and sicker — we heard reference to empty beds. Two thirds of the beds that this Harris government wants to close have patients in them today. That medical management is being done solely to save money, to weasel away from their responsibilities of modernizing the system. If these members would respond on behalf of their constituents, they would put the community system in place first. That's what we will do when we replace them.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** The bill that we are addressing today is Bill 129. The short title of that is amendments to tax statutes. It is, in a manner of speaking, an omnibus bill, an appropriate omnibus bill in the sense that it is minor amendments in a number of tax statutes plus one major amendment in the Income Tax Act.

If I can just for a moment briefly mention the various tax statutes that are affected by this: There is an extension to the refund program under the Land Transfer Tax Act, which is something our government had supported, and we would support that extension. There are some minor amendments to the Retail Sales Tax Act which clarify application of retail sales tax on certain consumer products in the software area, for example, in computer programming, and bring it in line with some of the federal changes. Some aspects to it around border collection, where Revenue Canada collects retail sales tax at borders and the provincial sales tax would be collected by the federal administration: It brings it in line with some of those changes. These are all relatively minor changes.

There are some changes to the Tobacco Tax Act. Given that the federal government has increased the tobacco tax, there is this interesting little number in the Tobacco Tax Act which says that the provincial tax on cigarettes will increase in step with the federal tax. It's an interesting way for the province never to have to actually announce that they are themselves introducing an increase on cigarettes, but it's something that makes sense, rather than having a big debate about this all the time, if that policy is established at the federal level.

1600

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** It could say no.

**Ms Lankin:** It could say no, but it's not something that I personally object to, again seeing both the revenue generation and the fact that I think the level of pricing of cigarettes does remain an important issue with respect to deterrence of purchasing of cigarettes by youth, who have less disposable income usually. That's an issue that has been debated in this Legislature before.

There's a repealing of the Small Business Development Corporations Act. This is not actually a tax statute, but this is one thing that I actually disagree with in here. But the government had made that announcement in the previous budget, that they were winding down the small business development corporation, and so in a sense, subsequent to that announcement a number of years ago, this is now being repealed, the act is being repealed. I think the kind of assistance programs that should be in place for small business should include some of the aspects that were under the Small Business Development Corporations Act, but I do agree that there are other ways to work with small business. So again, while that's not a part of the bill that I think is appropriate, I understand it and I wouldn't object to the bill just on those grounds.

Interestingly, in the bill there are also a couple of changes to the Liquor Licence Act and the Tobacco Control Act. Here I find this interesting, because these two are buried in amendments to tax statutes, and these aren't exactly tax statutes. These amendments are increasing the maximum fines. For example, in the Liquor Licence Act there are a number of provisions within the act where if you contravene that act, you would be fined, one of them being, for example, the prohibition against selling alcoholic beverages or liquor to citizens under the age of 19. If someone was caught doing that, the fines could be increased; similarly with the Tobacco Control Act, and again a similar example could be used.

Again, I don't object to that. I think these things are quite in keeping with public policy with respect to ensuring that tobacco vendors, for example, don't sell to under-age citizens. Those things I don't have an objection to, although I will point out that it's ironic from a government that continues to say, "We will not raise revenues to the government." In government, these things are often called non-tax revenues. These are the sorts of user fees and fines in other areas in the budget. If you look in the budget and you look at the pie charts of revenues, you'll see there are revenues that come from retail sales tax, from personal income tax, from other minor kinds of taxes, gas taxes, other things, and they're all spelled out, and then there's a chunk that come from what's referred to as non-tax revenues. It's still revenue to government. These fines are in that category of non-tax revenues.

Here's a government that says, "We're not going to take in more revenue, we're not going to have more user fees, we're not going to do any of that taking money out of people's pockets," and what do we find here? Increases in non-tax revenues. Again, I agree with these two provisions in terms of the Liquor Licence Act and the Tobacco Control Act, but I'd just point out the ironic nature of that, how the government says one thing to the



public and how when you look inside these omnibus bills and look at these minor changes to a variety of statutes, you actually find that they do something else. But I think we're getting quite used to that.

The major part of this bill, and that's what I want to spend most of my time talking to, is the changes to the Income Tax Act. Again here there are a couple of minor changes which just bring the act in line with the federal Income Tax Act in terms of its language. I'll give you an example. You know that the federal government changed the unemployment insurance system to a new name, the employment insurance system, another little bit of political spin-doctoring as far as I'm concerned. It is necessary, therefore, for our provincial statute to be correct in its language. If the feds change the name, you can't have a provincial statute that still refers to unemployment insurance. There are some minor changes like that.

The large change, though, and really what this particular budget bill is all about, is the changes to the Income Tax Act which implement phases 3 and 4 of the 30% Ontario tax rate cut. We know that is very significantly part of the government's Common Sense Revolution and what they campaigned on, a cut to personal income tax, and that they have proceeded along those lines.

There are a number of reasons why I am extremely opposed to this measure on the part of the government, and believe me, it's not because I want to pay more taxes. I, like everybody else, would love to have more disposable income. I'd love to be able to purchase items that I've had in my mind and have been dreaming about and would like to do or perhaps be able to go to the particular vacation spot that I've thought about and haven't been able to do. I think it would be very nice. But I have to balance that desire with the impact of such a public policy on our economy, on the ability of government to deliver services, on the government's fiscal situation with respect to deficit and debt reduction. All those things are very important.

When I see the fallout from the government proceeding at this time in the province's history with this 30% cut in provincial personal income tax, I think it is a devastating policy. It is devastating in terms of what it means for jobs and the kind of job creation we could be having in this province right now if it weren't for this government's tax cut. It is devastating in terms of the kinds of cuts the government has had to make in areas of services and government expenditures in order to finance part of that revenue loss from the tax cut, particularly areas like what it has meant to the poorest people in this province in terms of the cut to welfare rates, and certainly what it has meant to programs that I feel very strongly about, like child care, and how important that program is for people to be able to enter the workforce and be in the workforce and have good-quality, regulated care for their children. What I see happening in the government's policy with respect to that I fear turns the clock back two decades in terms of the provision of child care in this province.

I think it is devastating in terms of what it means to our health care system, something I feel very strongly about, having been honoured to have held the post of Minister of Health in this province. I believe very strongly in the restructuring that must take place, but

what I see happening, being fuelled by the fiscal imperative as opposed to the health reform imperative, is quite frightening, both the pace and the way in which it is being managed or, I would argue, being mismanaged.

I want to touch on those areas as I have this opportunity to address Bill 129. First of all, let's talk about the tax cut and what that means to the government's fiscal situation. As you know, the government, when they were elected, were facing a significant deficit. I certainly understand that deficit and the challenge of that, having spent the five years previous in government during one of the worst recessions this country has ever seen, that North America has ever seen, and knowing the gut-wrenching choices you have to make around attempting to provide services and maintain services in the province at the same time that revenue was actually decreasing year over year.

It wasn't a question only of expenditures, as I know the government members would like to make it out to be; it truly was a reflection of the vast numbers of people who were unemployed as a result of the recession, as a result of restructuring and downsizing going on, which was flowing out of free trade agreements and the kind of economic restructuring that was happening in terms of the type of industry and international competitors. All that settling out that people predicted would happen has in fact happened, and the switch from reliance on a manufacturing base more to an information-based industry and service industry. All those changes were happening at a time when the continent, if not more than the continent, was thrown into a very deep recession. You had an economic restructuring recession topped by a cyclical recession.

Of course, the government of the day saw revenues just dropping through the floor. Without any decisions having been taken, within the first few months I remember going into cabinet meetings and being told, "The previous government said there was a surplus, but the deficit is actually \$3 billion." Two weeks later we'd go into cabinet and they'd say, "The deficit is now \$5 billion." "Wait a minute. We haven't done anything. What are you talking about?" It was dramatic times as a result of the state of the economy, and there were some difficult choices to be made around the balance to be struck. Most of us, having reflected on those years, feel that had we had a better sense of how long and deep the recession was going to be — and I would say it was not just our government; all the experts predicted a short and rather shallow recession, but instead we had one of the deepest recessions in the history of this country, and a very long one as well.

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Had we had a better sense of that we might have looked at those first couple of years, where we made the conscious decision to invest in trying to get people back to work, and invest in fighting that recession as opposed to fighting that deficit, and looked to see if there was a different balance to be struck. I still think the theory was absolutely right, but maybe the balance would have been different. But those are things you can say in hindsight, because that information was not available to the economists, to the experts, to governments of any level, and many governments throughout this country found them-



selves faced with that significant challenge over those years.

I would say that the concept of a government during those very difficult times wanting to do everything it could to ensure that as many people as we could get to work would be able to work, as many people as we could get jobs for would have an opportunity to go and work, that people would not be relegated to the rolls of unemployment insurance and then welfare and get caught in that trap and not have a sense of hope and a way to provide for their families — I believe that's what government is for. I guess that's one of the reasons why I'm so disturbed to see a government which I believe is following a very ideological line with respect to this tax cut.

When you look at what the impact is, I would say two things in particular. The budget plans of the previous government and this government before the election, the Common Sense Revolution projections on this government's budgetary policy, showed that the deficit in the province could reasonably be eliminated a year and a half to two years earlier than the current Conservative government will accomplish that, and it could be done without the horrendous level of cuts we are seeing.

Why is that? Because pursuing the income tax cut denies the government revenue. We know that. That means revenue is not coming in. You forgo revenue.

#### *Interjection.*

**Ms Lankin:** I'll say to the member across, who continues to heckle through this, I'm trying to make a point and I think it's worth debating in terms of the economic policies here.

The fact that you forgo government revenue and you're trying to get to a balanced budget and eliminate the deficit means that you have to cut much, much deeper, to the tune of \$5 billion or \$6 billion more, out of expenditures. Because it takes a period of time to do it, you actually extend the number of years in which we will be in a deficit situation and we will have to borrow money to run the province of Ontario, and we have to pay debt interest on that.

People will know that each year there's an annual deficit that gets added to the debt. The debt is significant, and I will freely admit that a lot of that happened during those recessionary years, but surely, as we see a turnaround in the American economy, a turnaround that we are following — there's always a lag time but it is coming now — this is a time when you would want to see that deficit come down and start to reinvest in the infrastructure and jobs and services and in bringing down the debt, therefore eliminating the need for such a huge expenditure on interest on the debt. From that kind of fiscal policy what the government is doing doesn't make sense, but I also want to talk about it from an economic point of view.

The government argues it's giving that money back to us as taxpayers so we have it as disposable income in our pockets and when we go out and spend that we will fuel the economy. Fuelling the economy will produce a demand for goods and that will produce a need for more production of goods, which will produce a need for more workers, therefore this will spur all sorts of job creation.

A couple of things on that: If you want to spur the economy through expenditure of discretionary moneys, through consumer spending, one of the first things you would do is ensure that where you were giving that money back to people to spend, you would be giving it to people who would be the most likely to go out and spend it immediately. What do I mean by that? I mean that the most stimulative kind of tax cut would be a tax cut that puts more money in low-income Ontarians' pockets, because they're most likely to be in a position to want to spend that money.

Instead we've seen that when you have a flat percentage rate cut to income tax, it means the people at the highest incomes, who pay the highest percentage of income tax, get the highest percentage and highest amount of money back in their pockets. You've often heard people on this side — and some people may think it's rhetorical — give the examples of the bank presidents and the CEOs of multinational corporations and others, but it's very true. If you're earning \$200,000, if you're earning \$400,000, if you're like the president of one of the banks and you're earning over \$1 million or \$2 million a year, the amount of money you're getting back on Mike Harris's tax giveaway is phenomenal.

I suggest that my friend Matt Barrett doesn't need to rush out and spend that money and buy a new fridge. I think he's got enough money to buy all the fridges and cars and things he wants. I suspect that wealthier people will find a way to use that money, which will either be luxury items or trips abroad or investment, most likely. How does that stimulate the economy, when you give the majority of it to people who are not likely to go out and spend it?

On top of that, occasioned by this tax cut and the need to cut more in terms of government expenditures, the government coupled this with a cut in welfare rates. So the poorest people of the province, the people who spend every single cent they get — they have no savings; they can't keep money because you would claw it back from them in any event — the government has cut their income. What's the economics behind this? The people who would pay out, who would be part of purchasing goods, of stimulating the economy, are people whose incomes you've cut by over 20%.

Not only does that make no sense in terms of the economics of it, the moral bankruptcy of that is astounding. The number of children who are living in poverty — I know some of the ministers in the last couple of days were standing up and gloating about how Canada was named yet again the best country in the world to live in. We're all proud of that. But there was a cautionary note in that assessment in which they said there was a growing problem in this country, a near crisis of child poverty. I'm ashamed to say we live in a province that has contributed greatly to that by the policies of the cuts to welfare rates for families.

You have to remember that over 50% of the people receiving welfare are actually children. You must remember that as you think of these policies. I know it's driven by some sense that there's all this abuse and if we just get tougher people will get out to work. On the other hand, there have to be jobs for people to go to. In the



meantime, those kids are living in poverty, and a generation is growing up who will have significant problems in future as a result of the vulnerabilities of childhood in poverty in terms of their education, in terms of their health, in terms of a whole range of things, and we'll pay for it down the road. That should be of concern to the government, which cares most of all about fiscal matters, but it should also be of concern to all of us in terms of our children and the next generation.

I mentioned the issue of jobs as well, because while the government says this is going to spur all sorts of jobs, the nature of the cuts they are making, which have led to the layoff of thousands of people in the health care sector, cuts to thousands of jobs in the education sector and in the direct public service, there is an economic drag as a result of that.

The government is fond of saying, "The government doesn't create jobs; the private sector creates jobs." But you have to remember that a police officer, a firefighter, a teacher, a nurse — those being public sector jobs, are very productive jobs for our society. You know what? They contribute to our economy in terms of making our economy healthy, safe, the kind of place people want to live, where investors want to invest, all of that. But you know what? Those individual families that are supported by those public sector salaries go out and buy goods from the private sector. What's the sense in making cars if people aren't going to buy cars? If you put more and more people out of work their sense of security about the future — they're not going to go out and buy things.

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The government, on one hand, I think has chosen the wrong tax with respect to the stimulative effect. If they were going to do a tax cut I'd rather see it on sales tax or something like that because that would be more across the board for people in terms of ordinary goods and it wouldn't concentrate most of the money in the hands of the wealthiest who won't put it back into the economy directly. But beyond that, you have this need, therefore, to cut expenditures to start to meet the deficit target reduction, which is having a countereffect.

We are in a period of economic recovery, being dragged along by the United States. Thank goodness our exports are up, all of that, because of the US economy; it's not because of the Canadian economy. But that's good. Right? There's a reflection for our own economy and that's very important. But just think what could be happening in terms of the amount of jobs and economic activity in this province if we didn't have the drag in terms of the cuts in government expenditure and the layoffs as a result of that. Incredible the opportunity that we are missing.

I also said that I wanted to talk about child care. The effects of cuts in a number of areas of government are quite dramatic, but in the area of child care, this government is prone to standing up and making announcements about, "We're doing more in this area than any other government in Ontario ever has; we're doing more than any other government in Canada." I laugh. The Premier and others have got this sort of pat way of saying all of this but it doesn't always bear out in the end. Let me give you an example.

Not in this year's budget, in last year's budget the finance minister said, "We are going to spend more money on child care than ever in the history of this province." This was a grand announcement of \$200 million more to be injected into child care: \$40 million a year over five years. The way that works is the first year is a \$40-million new expenditure rolled into the child care budget, next year another \$40 million, which means the budget's increased by \$80 million in total, the next year another \$40 million. You get the picture. Over five years you're spending \$200 million a year more on child care. Well, take my breath away. As a child care advocate, as someone who believes very strongly in this, I was absolutely amazed that this particular government would make that kind of investment. I was a little cynical.

It turns out I was right. The government didn't spend one penny of that \$40 million. They have now abandoned the commitment to the \$200 million and in fact are bringing about changes which are going to decimate the quality of the not-for-profit child care system in this province and instead are replacing — certainly not in terms of the number of dollars — their commitment to do something about child care with a child care tax credit.

Again, let me point out to you, the people they target who they want to get out into the workplace, those people on welfare, think of those families with children. They absolutely require support to get child care. They can't afford good-quality, regulated child care when they're on welfare. They need the subsidized support. There are huge waiting lists. This child tax credit doesn't go to people on welfare, not at all, not one cent of it. It doesn't help them.

The government says it is targeted to help those low-income Ontarians, not the welfare recipients but those people who are working, but working at a low wage. Let me tell you the maximum amount of money you're going to be able to get back is about \$400 a year, which should buy you about two weeks of good-quality child care for your kid. Think about it.

To boot, you've got to put the money out up front, pay for it, get the receipts and in next year's income tax, when you file it, file it to get the money back. How many people are in a position to do that? They don't have the money in the first place. So who is it going to help again? Higher-income — some middle-income families might get some benefit, and I hope so and that would be good — but primarily higher-income families. This is all nuts in terms of what we should be doing as a government to help our citizens get back into the workplace.

I also want to address the issue of our health care system. I heard members talk about the fact that previous governments had moved to restructure and had closed hospital beds and then made these grand statements that not one building was closed, the bricks and mortar were left there and people didn't have — I like this macho stuff — the guts to do it. Come on.

The restructuring was in its infancy. The need to reallocate money from patient care, illness treatment, to prevention and wellbeing, the need to understand the determinants of health, all of that work was just being done, all of the understanding of the increase in efficiency in delivery of health care because of better phar-



maceutical products, because of newer technologies was all just having its impact. The refocusing on ambulatory care was all just beginning. I think it is incredibly important that those first steps were taken along with involving communities in the decision of how to plan the restructuring of their health care systems, not simply the hospitals. That's what's wrong with what this government is doing now.

I believe there shouldn't be this provincial commission. I think the way to go with the district health councils and local people's involvement and control is the right way to go. But putting that aside, if you're going to hand it over to a provincial commission, it should have been the health system's restructuring. You don't say, "We give you the power to go out there and do the unpopular thing of closing hospitals but we're not going to listen and take directives from you in terms of the reinvestment in the communities."

The health care system is what needs to be restructured. Hospitals are only one part of it, doctors are only one part of it. Community health, long-term care, health promotion, illness prevention, wellbeing, looking at the determinants of health which have to do with whether you have a roof over your head, whether your environment is clean, whether you are getting good nutrition, those are the things that make people healthy.

To simply look at the hospitals is a policy that I think leads to mismanagement of the very precious resource that we have in our health care system. Why is it being done that way so quickly, in such a forced way, in looking at the big-ticket items like hospital expenditures? It's because of the fiscal pressure, and you've got the fiscal pressure because of your tax policy of giving away revenues.

As I said, this bill has a number of minor amendments to various statutes which I find inoffensive; some I actually support. But the thrust in the main theme within this bill, which is the income tax cut, I believe is an ideologically driven policy. I believe it is not the cause for any economic activity that we see growing out there. That's being led by the heated-up US economy and exports. I'm glad that's happening. One of the members opposite said, "It must kill you to see the economy growing." Absolutely not. I want to see people back to work. But you know, we could be doing so much better. Do you know what we could be doing in terms of preserving services and public sector jobs?

I will vote against this bill because I believe this is a bankrupt public policy. I believe this is not the way to stimulate the economy. I might not disagree with the government's goals in terms of making government efficient, in terms of stimulating the economy, in terms of creating jobs, but I don't see this policy doing it. I see it costing us greatly in this province, particularly when much of it is being paid for, the money that is going to the bank presidents, as I said, and the others, by a cut in welfare rates to the province's poorest people and particularly driving children into poverty. That I can never agree with, that I can never endorse, that I can never support.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mrs Marland:** That was a very interesting debate by the former Minister of Health and, interestingly enough, the former Minister of Economic Development and Trade. In both those areas she had a lot of experience, and she says today that our fiscal pressure is because of our tax cuts. What I would say to her in response to that is, are you suggesting that you didn't have any fiscal pressures? Every government has fiscal pressures but not every government creates 1,000 new jobs every day in the last three months. That is a tremendous record.

I don't have nearly the same sense of doom and gloom that the member for Beaches-Woodbine has, because in the last 24 hours, as a matter of fact since 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon, I have been at the opening of three new plants and industries in the city of Mississauga, one of which, this morning, was Glaxo Wellcome. That is now a \$130-million plant in Mississauga. This former Minister of Health knows very well, because she was at one of the openings of this plant initially, the success of this company, why they choose Ontario and why they have chosen again, in the last two years, to expand in Ontario: because they believe in the future of Ontario under this government. The president and CEO of Glaxo Wellcome said that this morning.

NovaLink was another opening I was at today, a company that two years ago, interestingly enough, was moving to the States. They waited until the election on June 8, 1995, to decide, and then when we won the election they made their decision to stay in Ontario and build their plant in Mississauga, and we celebrated that today.

1630

**Mr Gerretsen:** First of all, I think everyone in this House would applaud the creation of jobs in this province. Certainly the more openings all of us can go to of different plants or different businesses would be better for the entire province and would be better for all of us. But to suggest for a moment that this government has been responsible for the creation of 1,000 jobs per day is just absolutely ludicrous. According to our calculations, the Common Sense Revolution promised 145,000 jobs per year. We've now had two years of it, so there should have been something like 290,000 jobs created and you're still about 150,000 jobs behind. Those are the facts. I wish they were wrong, I wish many more jobs would be created in this province, but that simply has not happened.

The former Minister of Health hit the nail right on the head when it comes to hospital and health care restructuring. The most common complaint and comment I get from people about health restructuring has to do with the fact that on the one hand the system seems to be closing hospitals but the people out in our communities simply don't know what the alternative resources are going to be. The community care facilities, the community care operations etc just aren't in place as yet. If this government had taken the entire picture and the entire health care restructuring portfolio as one entity and showed people the community care facilities that are available as a result of the closure of certain hospitals, then there may have been a much better understanding in the province. So far, all we've seen is the fact that about 40 hospitals



in this province are set to close, and the people of Ontario don't accept that without any alternatives.

**Mr Pouliot:** I too was most appreciative of the good comments from the member who availed herself of the opportunity to tell us in very simple, straightforward words what brought her to serve the good people of Beaches-Woodbine.

No one will not be fully appreciative of a recovery. Recovery is good. I, for one, sitting with the New Democratic Party, am delighted every morning when I look at the recovery. I think it benefits a lot of people. You bet I am. Whether we use the quartile ranking as a base — when that comes out I love every second of it. But what is mentioned by the bond rating agency is that it's a matter of choice, it's a matter of extreme.

If you wish to reconcile the deficit, one of the best ways of doing it is to upgrade your rating. Then you have a vacuum of three possibilities which would allow you to tap the marketplace with fewer dollars; it would cost you less to borrow. One upgrade means 25 basis points in terms of interest, which translates into \$25 million. You have the opportunity to do that. The bond rating agencies are saying to slow down on the tax cut, because the longer it takes you to reconcile the deficit, the closer you are to the cycle moving on from full-speed recovery to neutral, to maybe a correction. The longer you're out there, the more you're exposed.

In terms of how to do it, it's quite simple. This is an opportunity that might not repeat itself for some time. Full blast ahead, hit the deficit and then all the possibilities will exist for you. I thank the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** Just a few comments that I felt compelled to put on the record with respect to the debate by the former Minister of Health under the NDP: If my memory serves me correctly, and I think it does, when the Conservatives were in power back in the mid-1980s they commenced a process of closing some hospital beds. At that time it was vociferously opposed by both the NDP and the Liberals. They said this was awful, this was the end of health care in this province.

Then of course the Liberals got into power, and guess what, folks? They closed more beds. That was opposed by the NDP. The NDP said this was terrible, there would be no way you could recover from this. However, when the NDP came into power, they closed even more beds than the combined total of what the Liberals and the PCs had closed. All of this is nonsense. Clearly these beds needed to be closed. When you have such things as laparoscopic surgery, you don't need as many beds because you're in day surgery.

The fact is that the NDP, to their credit, asked the district health councils to look at reorganizing the health care system, and the recommendations of the district health councils have been substantially agreed to by the hospital restructuring commission. There have been some improvements over what the district health councils said, but we have made it an absolutely non-partisan commission that is trying to restructure our hospital care so that we can move into the next century instead of looking at

the last century. So there seems to be a little bit of a flaw in the recollection of the speakers here.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine has two minutes to respond.

**Ms Lankin:** I hope the public watching will reflect on this: I actually attempted to engage in some discussion of ideas and differences of approaches, and not a lot of rhetoric about numbers and percentages and all of that. What did we just hear back? Let me say to the member for York Mills, I remember when the Conservative government went about trying to close hospitals, like Lakeshore Psychiatric Hospital, and didn't put a penny into the community services and left people living homeless on the streets and in boarding houses in Parkdale. I remember that.

That's exactly the process we see going on now, where you've got a hospital restructuring commission and where you are not doing the community reinvestment at the same time. That's the difference in what the district health councils were doing. We gave them the job of health systems restructuring, community side and hospital side. You've given the hospital restructuring commission only the power to close hospitals; no power to give directives with respect to community reinvestment.

Let me say to the member for Mississauga South, who is a dear friend of mine, that I'm very disappointed with her comments. She stands up and says, "The member didn't mention that this is the only government creating 1,000 jobs a day." What nonsense. This from a government that continually, day after day, says, "Governments don't create jobs; the private sector does."

She refers to Glaxo Wellcome. Let's remember that the first expansions were planned for and done under an NDP government. Let's talk about the Toyotas and the Bombardiers and the others that expanded.

When you talk about the 1,000 jobs a day, you refer to a three-month period. When you talk about our government's record and you talk about a loss, you're talking about the whole term and mandate, all over a period of recession. What you don't talk about is 1994 when we were creating jobs at a record much higher than you're creating now, and it has stalled since your tax cut. Let's be factual. Let's get the facts straight and not spin-doctor and rhetoric in this place.

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**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I would think, given the recent debate, that all members here would agree on one thing: Job creation is very important in Ontario. Observing the recent federal election, job creation was the number one priority. It certainly was in my riding.

To address Bill 129, what I consider a job growth, tax reduction bill, a job creation bill really, a bill designed to eliminate barriers to job creation by eliminating taxes, lowering taxes, to stimulate economic activity, we on this side of the House know that by lowering taxes we will create jobs. We also know by the past record of both previous governments that taxes kill jobs. Taxes take away people's ability to spend, to invest and to live to a standard that they have worked hard for.

Perhaps we should review the record just to remind everyone here and those watching on television what the



1985-95 years did to the people of Ontario, because this government has had to work hard at correcting the damage done during that period and we worked hard on restoring Ontario's neglected economic engine. I'd like to refresh some memories.

The last two governments in this province hiked taxes no fewer than 65 times, including 11 personal income tax hikes. Consumers were given 65 reasons not to spend money, businesses were given 65 reasons not to hire new employees, and investors were given 65 reasons to keep their money out of our economy. During that period, wages increased 54% while the tax burden increased 73%. In effect, no one in this province got to see a single penny of any raise they may have received. This government is giving people the raise they have worked hard for so they can pay down a mortgage, buy a new car or pick up a used car. We are letting people keep their hard-earned money because they spend it much more wisely than any government can, and with a much more positive effect on the economy.

We know that government cannot spend its way out of trouble. We know that the tax burden of the past was just a sign of what I consider a greedy government. My 10-year-old daughter has this opinion. My daughter gets furious when she puts her loonie on the counter to buy a dollar's worth of candy and finds out it actually costs \$1.15. She categorizes this, to use her words, as "Greedy, greedy." My 12-year-old son is a Monopoly player. As my son explains to me, when you go four spaces past Go in Monopoly, you pay a 10% tax or \$200. Monopoly is a 10% tax, not —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I want to remind members that interjections are out of order. They are uncalled for; they aren't part of the order. I want to bring that to your attention once again. I'm very patient, but I will not tolerate it.

**Mr Barrett:** If I could continue the analogy with Monopoly, let's go back to Go. Go four spaces forward past Go. If you land on that space, you pay a 10% tax or \$200 — not 50%, as does the typical family in Ontario. Of course, my children understand the need for financing our education system. They realize that physicians and police officers don't work for free. I feel my children's point is well taken, and obviously it falls on fertile ground in my opinion.

We are taxed to the hilt in this country. We are among the most highly taxed people in North America. At over 50%, our marginal tax rate in Ontario is second only to British Columbia. As people in the House would know, the marginal tax rate is the tax we pay on that marginal dollar, that last dollar of income earned. In Canada, a person earning around \$60,000 a year pays a tax at a top marginal rate of 54%. In the United States, you have to earn \$200,000, and that's in US dollars, before you pay a top rate, which is set at 39%. I might mention the US unemployment rate is about half of what we're seeing in Canada.

This year, June 29 is tax freedom day. That's about 10 days hence. Including GST and all other taxes in Canada, every working person surrenders about 50 cents on the dollar to the state. In dual-income families, essentially

one person is working to support the government, a person who in many ways feels they are contributing half the family income to support the family. I might also point out that government has not been able to survive on that other half dollar. It borrows, on the assumption that our children and our grandchildren will be willing to pay off that debt.

These last two Ontario budgets are not the only budgets to cut taxes in recent memory. In the early 1990s, the federal Tories cut taxes, but most provinces, including Ontario, defeated the purpose by raising their own rates. Since then, Ottawa has been expanding what qualifies as taxable income. As well, with inflation and wage increases, people have been pushed into higher tax brackets. Increases in Canada pension premiums and employment insurance premiums are also, in my opinion, a form of increased taxation.

All around the world, jurisdictions have been cutting taxes. Our trading partners and competitors have already recognized the link between tax cuts and job creation. More than 50 countries, including most of the western industrialized nations, have lowered taxes on individuals and businesses in recent years, and the results have been real and impressive. Unemployment levels have fallen, private sector investment has increased, new jobs have been created, and income levels have risen, and yet there are actually some people in Ontario and throughout the rest of our country who oppose tax cuts.

If high taxes created jobs, there would be zero unemployment in Ontario and the rest of the country. If high taxes were good for revenues, we would have budget surpluses and no accumulated debt. If high taxes helped economic growth, we would all be living in boom times. To repeat, high taxes kill jobs, undermine government revenues and slow economic growth. So it really does make sense for government to leave more money in people's hands to get people spending again, to boost the consumer economy and to kickstart our recovery — very simply, to get people working.

Tax cuts are working. The Royal Bank of Canada projects that Ontario's real gross domestic product growth will be 3.3% in 1997 and 3.6% in 1998. This is higher than our projections of 3.2%. The Royal says that the growth will be led by manufacturing and residential construction, as lower interest rates, lower taxes and pent-up consumer demand spur growth.

I would like to quote the Royal Bank: "Ontario will benefit from the government's decision to extend for another year a program set up last year that gives first time home buyers a refund for provincial land transfer taxes on newly built homes."

I would also quote the conference board: "Strong consumer spending and continued gains in export-oriented industries will propel economic activity in Ontario."

The Scotiabank: "Ontario's economy is shifting into higher gear as residential construction and business investment add to the impetus of exports."

More signs that our plan is working are in job creation numbers. Ontario employment rose by 40,600 net new jobs in May; the job gain in the last three months is 101,000 jobs. The unemployment rate dropped to 8.5% in May. I know yesterday the member for Welland-Thorold,



who is absent this afternoon, talked about unemployment levels in double digits. Well, 8.5 might be two digits, but it's far from a double digit.

Ontario retail sales have increased in four of the past five months, rising 0.8% in March. Housing starts in the first five months of 1997 are up 48.1%.

I also want to stress that Ontario's tax cuts, which will average over 30% for most Ontarians, are already paying for themselves through higher revenues and stronger economic growth. Again, the evidence is in: Tax cuts create jobs, and in addition they pay for themselves. Ontario's plan for cutting taxes, reducing red tape and restoring a climate for investment is also paying off. Ontario is becoming once again the engine of the Canadian economy. We're leading the nation in job creation. In 1996, Ontario's private sector created 90,000 new jobs, and that represented 56% of the national private sector job creation total. Some 91% of all taxpayers will see an Ontario tax cut of 30% or greater.

Families are very important in our community and in our province, and the 1997 budget will continue to assist hard-working families throughout Ontario. There will be a new child care tax credit for lower-income families of up to \$400 per child. In addition to providing help with child care costs, the budget will reduce taxes further for low-income families, particularly those with children. In total, the Ontario tax reduction program cuts taxes for 530,000 individuals and families and eliminates Ontario income tax entirely for another 655,000 individuals and families. The federal government, in contrast, is collecting income taxes from more than 55% of the low-income families that are presently and will be paying no Ontario tax.

1650

This 1997 budget contains no fewer than 20 job-creating tax cuts and credits. For example, the land transfer tax credit for first-time home buyers has been extended for 12 months. This saves first-time home buyers up to \$1,725. The retail sales tax rebate on building materials for farmers will be extended for 12 months. A 10% tax credit will be available for employers to create 45,000 internship spaces over the next three years. The cooperative education tax credit will be expanded.

The Ontario business-research institute tax credit will support qualifying business-sponsored research and development performed by eligible universities, teaching hospitals and other non-profit research centres. To encourage medical research, the sales tax exemption for R&D equipment will be extended to non-profit medical research facilities, and through what is called a research and development challenge fund — this is a \$3-billion fund — the province will contribute \$500 million over the next 10 years.

The basic film and television tax credit will increase to 20% for Ontario-based productions. Computer animation and special effects for Ontario films will qualify for this combined 35% tax reduction. Publishers will be eligible for a refundable tax credit of 30% of pre-production and promotional costs.

In last year's budget, the budget of 1996, Minister Eves announced a three-year plan to cut the employer health tax by completely exempting the first \$400,000 of

payroll. This marks the second year of our plan. When fully implemented, January 1, 1999, some 270,000, or 88%, of Ontario employers will no longer have to pay this job-killing payroll tax.

These tax reductions stimulate consumer spending and create pools of job-creating investment capital. By further reducing personal incomes taxes, this 1997 budget will leave more of our own money in our hands, whether it be to spend, to save or to invest.

The evidence is in: Ontario's economy, our economy, is rebounding. Business and consumer confidence is up, and all of the indicators tell us we're poised for future growth in job creation. Consumer spending, real estate, exports, overtime work, even help wanted ads are on the upswing according to data in the budget papers.

Lower taxes, the strong competitive position of Ontario producers and a renewed spirit of enterprise are leading private sector job creation. Increasing confidence and after-tax income have accelerated housing and consumer activity, creating increased employment in construction. Business and personal services continue to lead job creation. Manufacturing will remain strong with recent auto plant expansions and continuing strength in US demand. Private sector economists expect the unemployment rate to decline, despite the growth in the labour force, as individuals are returning to the workforce.

Our housing market is leading the surge of the domestic economy, with strong growth in sales of both new and existing homes. Existing Ontario home sales are up by 17.3%. Ontario housing starts are up over 54% so far this year.

Consumer spending is expected to continue to strengthen over the 1997-99 period, again stimulated by lower taxes, strong job creation, rising wages and low interest rates. More disposable income and low interest rates will ease the debt burden of many households. Mortgage and consumer debt servicing costs currently eat up about 9.1% of personal disposable income. This ratio will fall as debt is refinanced and new borrowing occurs at reduced interest rates.

Out of necessity, Canadian industries have to become highly competitive. In the early 1990s, Canadian producers were burdened with high operating costs, high commercial and industrial rents and exorbitant taxes. Today, with a business-minded government in power, there is ample and affordable commercial and industrial space, and hence it's much easier for companies to compete.

To conclude, what does all this mean? I apologize for giving out a lot of data and a lot of figures based on our economy. Very simply, Ontario's economy is bouncing back, and that means good things for the hardworking people in this country.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Gerretsen:** Of course the one figure he doesn't give is the fact that the international bond rating agencies are giving this government no higher a credit rating than the last government, about which they complain so much. Of course the main reason for that is that you're still adding on to the public debt of this province. You will still add on something like \$20 billion by the time your mandate is up.



You'd be a heck of a lot better off, and I think you'd be doing the people of Ontario a much greater service, if you would avoid the tax cut and simply take that money and put it on the public debt, because you are still adding on to the public interest that's being spent on a year-to-year basis. It went up from \$7.1 billion to \$9.1 billion in a matter of two years. That's \$2 billion more of additional interest payments that are being made.

The other thing he could have mentioned, he said 91% of the people are getting a 30% tax cut. I would say that probably 100% of the taxpayers are getting a 30% tax cut, because that's what your legislation says. But what does it mean in actual dollars and cents to the people who are getting this money?

This is from a KPMG report, not from our propaganda or your propaganda, an independent report, and it clearly states that if you've got a taxable income of \$25,000, your tax cut this year is \$295. That's about \$5 a week. If you make \$50,000, it's \$970. If you make \$100,000, it's \$2,310.

Now, you tell me who gets most of the money in your tax cut. We all know that people who are best off and make the most money are getting by far the biggest cut. Why don't you say that to the people of Ontario? The reason you're not saying that is quite simple: You don't want them to know what's really going on, that you're still adding on to the public debt of the province.

**Mr Pouliot:** This is a government that prides itself on attempting to run the affairs of the province, the affairs of the state, in the same fashion as they would run a business and their personal affairs. If it is so, if this were true, doesn't it make more sense to pay the credit card? You don't go out and give yourself gifts when you're overextended. Every economist, to a person, will say that you pay your debts first. This is good money management.

When the roll comes on, when those debentures, those coupons come due, you have an opportunity during a recovery to take the money that comes in. You should have more money coming in, not fewer dollars, as is the case as we develop this ill-conceived theme.

Except there's a fly in the ointment. They're on the hook. They said while they were soliciting during the course of the election campaign that they would cut taxes by 30%, and they are determined to do so. If the same success had been achieved with a commitment of 15%, you can bet your last dollar that 15% tax cut is all the people would have got and the rest would have gone against the deficit.

They'd have us believe that if Mr Greenspan and other authorities were to raise interest rates, if the market and the Dow Jones were to undergo a severe correction, because the Reform-Conservatives are in power in Ontario, we would continue to live in oblivion and we would not be impacted. Quite the contrary, we shall follow the policies and the economic success or the lack of it of the United States of America.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** The member's time is up. Further questions or comments?

1700

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I want to rise in support of the comments of my friend from Norfolk

whom I've known in two years in government to be a very honourable man, a man who ran because he was tired of governments that would say one thing and do another.

**Interjection:** And they're over there.

**Mr Hudak:** And they are over there and over there for a reason, as the minister says.

I know that Mr Barrett, the member for Norfolk, is going to stick with that plan, to deliver on the promises of the Common Sense Revolution and, as you said, to deliver a 30% tax cut for working Ontarians in the province today. The members opposite still, after two years of lectures, have missed the point, that when you cut taxes you create more jobs and more revenue coming in. You cut taxes and you have more revenue, which means we're ahead on our deficit targets, which means more money for health care and moving ahead of our targets towards balancing the budget for the year 2000-01. So not only a tax cut for working Ontarians but also more money into health care and great progress in terms of balancing the budget.

Last night in the same debate the opposition acknowledged that we're doing an excellent job in reducing the deficit. Now they're talking about the human deficit. Their new line is the human deficit. But I say to that, we are reducing the human deficit, when you talk about 200,000 fewer people and families depending on welfare, 200,000 more people with jobs now in Ontario who had given up looking for work under previous governments, when you're talking about more money in health care so that patients can get kidney dialysis closer to home in St Catharines instead of having to drive all the way to Hamilton, or recently at Peel Memorial Hospital in Brampton so they don't have to take that drive down the road, more money into cardiac care, more money into cancer care to get the treatment to the patients who truly deserve it at the right place, at the right time.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I think the timing of the member for Niagara South's little two-and-a-half minute speech was perfect. All the little kids are home and I'm sure they're just curled up in their chairs watching the TV, because what we heard was a fairy tale here. It was story time by the member for Niagara South about the tax cut. He's talking about the deficit. This government is going to add another \$25 billion to the debt of this province and the reason they're going to do that is because they're giving away \$5 billion a year in forgone revenue because of this tax cut.

Who is this tax cut going to? It's not actually going to people who could really use it, to needy people, people who have a pent-up consumer demand, who need to replace the refrigerator, need to get new carpeting, really could use that to buy clothes for their kids. That could cause some stimulus. It's not being targeted to people like that. It's going to the rich people. It's going to the bank presidents. They're walking away with another \$150,000 and they're putting that in emerging market funds around the world. It's not going into the Ontario economy. You're just giving that money away.

We had a plan. What we said is, let's get to a balanced budget. We said we'd get to a balanced budget in four years. That's what you should be doing. You should be working faster on a balanced budget by not having the



tax cut. In the meantime, you wouldn't be cutting all those services that are hurting regions like mine in northern Ontario.

When you talk to members of the chamber of commerce in Timiskaming, a lot of them are very wary of that tax cut because they've seen the results of it. They've seen the service cuts which mean very good government jobs have been lost in our area. Where does that money go when we have government jobs in our area? That money goes right back into the economy.

All our small business people in Kirkland Lake and the Tri-town area of Haileybury, Cobalt and New Liskeard are suffering. They're hanging on by a thread because a lot of that economy that was there because of government and government support services that we've had in our area is no longer there. That revenue is out of our economy and that's hurting us. Your whole tax cut scheme is not creating jobs, it's losing jobs in Ontario.

**Mr Barrett:** I would remind the members opposite from both parties that two years ago the deficit was close to \$12 billion a year and that was a continuation of a 10-year program of spending more money than was coming in. Two years ago Ontario was in a state of shambles. Job-killing barriers were stifling business growth and taxes were continuing to climb and the job opportunities were declining. Again, both governments had a belief that spending more would somehow solve all our problems.

When Mike Harris came in, we offered a new beginning. We've delivered on that promise. We're offering a brighter future. Today taxes for many hardworking Ontario families are lower. To date, we've brought in 30 tax cuts, including cuts to personal income tax, payroll taxes and a child tax credit to assist working families who do not have institutional day care.

Simply put, and I've said this previously, we're getting people to keep more of their hard-earned money. I have to reinforce this: It's their money, it's not our money to spend on their behalf. In addition to tax cuts, and that's not the sole answer, we've streamlined government. We're eliminating waste and duplication. Government today is much smaller, leaner and more efficient than it was two years ago.

I do wish to remind the members opposite that a government that grows too big, spends too much and tries to do more than it's capable of truly risks its ability to deliver those things that define us as a society. I know in the debate this afternoon health care was mentioned by members of both parties, a top priority in addition to job creation. We need a healthy economy to continue to maintain the health of our citizens in Ontario and to maintain our education and our criminal justice system.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I'll advise that I'll be splitting my half-hour, leaving about 18 minutes for my associate from Parkdale. Will that be fine?

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there consent to share the time? Agreed.

**Mr Sergio:** I'm glad I can join in the debate on Bill 129, as it's part of the 1997 budget which was brought down earlier this year. Let me say that the government has every right to bring down the budget and other documents since they have taken power. They have the

right to bring down the budget and other laws. I believe it's also our rightful position to make comments the way we see it on behalf of the people we represent, as we normally represent in this House the views of those that have elected us.

I want to speak directly to the Premier and some of the ministers who are present here today and to say to all the members of the House that it's fine and dandy when they say: "We have been elected to do certain things. This is our budget, these are our views. That's the way we wish to proceed in governing the fortunes of the province for the balance of our term and that is how we want to proceed with it."

It's like asking politicians, "How was your election to Parliament?" and stuff like that. I would bet that you wouldn't find one that would say it was easy. Everyone will say: "Oh gosh, it was so tough, we had a tough campaign and good competitors. It was a real tough campaign and it was hard to get elected." Now that the government side has been elected to govern with a majority, they say, "We've been elected and we'll do whatever we want." This is the message we are getting. This is the message that they are giving to the people out of this chamber.

The funny thing is that the government was elected not with 36%, 38%, it was elected to govern on behalf of all the people. It will be very sad if we continue to hear from members on the government side saying, "We are doing for the people that elected us exactly what we said we would be doing." Are they forgetting then the balance of the people who didn't vote for the government of the day? Let me say that the hardest thing was not getting elected to this House and governing. The hardest thing to do for the government and for every member of this House today is to stay where we are. It is harder for the government not to have been elected but to stay where they are until the election and for the next election.

I want to address my comments in the brief time that I have on two major points of the bill and on the budget because I think it reflects the major components of the budget itself. It addresses two particular points: One is the income tax cut and the other is balancing the budget. Those are a couple of areas where the government seems to be enjoying itself and saying, "We promised that and we are going to do it."

1710

Just to go back to the reference I made before, that it's harder to stay in power than to have been elected, as the opposition we have to continually remind the government, and that's why we've been saying in the last couple of days don't curtail our ability to speak on behalf of the people, to tell the government that what they are doing is not the way to go about it.

When they were elected, they made a promise to have a 30% rebate. So be it, but it's how they are doing it. That's the problem. On whose back are they really balancing the budget? That takes us along the way of how they are going to make this 30% tax cut. Certainly it would be fair to say, "We are going to take a little bit from everybody, every taxpayer in Ontario, to make sure we do it in a very fair, sensitive and balanced way." But they are not.



I have here for the benefit of the members of the House, especially the members of the government — as a matter of fact, I have three of this particular document. One is well kept in one of my drawers, one I have framed and this one I use on a daily basis. I would recommend that the Premier and the minister and the members of the House have one available until the next election because they will need it. This document, which is the Common Sense Revolution, says absolutely nothing of the things they are doing today to accomplish the silly promises they made. I think that was the cornerstone of their promise.

Why are they doing what they promised, what they have included in the budget and other documents, the way they are doing it? Many times they have said, "We are doing exactly what we said we would be doing." That is my reason for keeping this very handy, because I want to tell them they are not doing what they said in this particular paper.

I will deviate from my presentation, because I had made considerable notes. Just let me go to one particular area of the Common Sense Revolution, where it deals with one very important aspect which they cannot get away from. They cannot get away from this particular document. I want to go to page 6 of the document, where it deals with one extremely important area and how it affects a particular interest group, if we want to call it that, and how the government is exploiting this particular group to accomplish their measures and what they have said in their budget and prior to the election.

I'm referring to health care, because when we say health care we mean for seniors, we mean for women, we mean for children, we mean for the handicapped, we mean for people in general. Health care is universal. But just let me say what they have said about Fair Share health care when it comes to seniors. It says this: "A 'Fair Share' health care levy will be collected through the provincial income tax, with the rich paying more than the middle class, and people making less than \$50,000 a year paying nothing. At \$50,000 the levy will be \$100."

I wonder if the government members in the House have skipped reading this, and if they have read it, if it bothers them that this is a concrete part of the Common Sense Revolution. I'm sure it's something they don't want to be reminded of, something they don't want to know about, but I'm afraid that not only myself and members of the opposition but other people out there will on a continual basis be reminding the government of the contents of the Common Sense Revolution and the promise they cannot keep.

It's not that they don't want to keep it; they cannot keep it. Even the latest recommendation from one of the major financial institutions commenting on the affairs of the province says, "If they want to accomplish what they said they would with respect to the tax cuts and other things, they have to cut a lot deeper." My goodness, how much deeper can they cut? They have affected every sector not only of the economy but every social sector in our province.

It goes further. With respect to health care, especially for seniors — and again this is Mike Harris talking — "Let's start with the top priorities — the essential

services that Ontarians wants to see protected: health care." How about that? Don't we all know what happened to health care? "We will not cut health care spending. It's far too important. And frankly, as we all get older, we are going to need it more and more."

Mr Premier, isn't it wonderful that somebody had put it down for you? I don't think those were your words, because otherwise I'm sure it would bother you to read them in your own document today. I would suggest that you read it once in a while, because what you have done especially to seniors is atrocious. It's totally counter to what you said in your own document — not only to seniors above \$50,000; poor seniors, the only thing they have is a measly pension, and those below \$14,000 have to pay \$2 every time they walk into a drugstore, every time a senior — or anyone, for that matter — needs drug assistance, they need two, three, four, five different types of medications.

Some of the things we are getting now from some of our seniors is that they are saying to the pharmacist: "Which one can I take today? I can't afford to buy two of them." So now they have to skip days to get proper medication. I'd like to remind the Premier of the consequences of our seniors doing that.

I don't want to prolong this with respect to seniors. I could spend my time speaking strictly on that, and I haven't even touched on the long-term care for not only seniors but any others — handicapped or people who need long-term care, how this affects those people.

We forget that when we say seniors or other people in need of whatever care, there are a number of other people who are affected as well. The families of those people are affected very adversely. That is what we call the human deficit. It's not only that we see the person suffering, senior or otherwise; it can be anyone waiting to receive medical attention, an operation or what have you. I think it is another part of the suffering as well. It's not only the patient who directly has to receive that care, but the family members also suffer with it. Very often, I have to say, a lot of these families are incapable of dealing with the suffering associated with one of their own, and that's when the government must become more compassionate when they present and approve their own ruling. That's what we are saying. We are not saying that it's wrong for you to present this particular law or that you should or should not have it approved within a particular period of time. We are saying yes, this is your budget, this is what you want to do. At the end, of course, with the majority you have now, you will have ample time to approve it, but we are pointing out to the government that what they are doing and how they are doing it is wrong.

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In the last while we have heard a lot about major problems associated with child care, our children, education. Those are some of the fundamental areas that deal with our own society at present, and most importantly, in the future because if we don't take care of the problems of today, we cannot have a better future.

The Premier has spoken many times with respect to our students, our children in universities and colleges. We can't expect those young people to progress, to succeed, unless we assist them today, give them the tools today,



and I have to say to the government that the way they are doing it is not the way. When you are penalized with all your taxes, with all your user fees, on single mothers, on unemployed parents, certainly you are not providing the incentive for those people to maintain kids in schools, universities, colleges and so forth. You are not giving them a hand up. You are not giving the kids that initiation push they need to get on with life and do better in the future.

The Minister of Education says, "We want to see excellence in the classroom." You must give the necessary tools to teachers and parents to accomplish that. You cannot say, "We are going to cut, cut, cut to the tune of millions of dollars," and then pretend that you're going to have bigger classes, that you are going to have fewer teachers, and accomplish at the same time excellence in the classroom. It's not us saying that; it is the professional people who give training to those people in the classroom. They are saying: "You've got to start at the bottom with kindergarten classes. We've got to build up these kids. Kindergarten, grade schools, grades 8, 12, 13, colleges, universities and so forth." That's the only way we can accomplish what the government is saying but what they are not doing.

We should be moving into the other area. I want to expand on a couple of other issues, because I know my time, unfortunately, is running out.

We can accomplish that, and again I don't want to take anything from what the government is intending to do, because it's their prerogative to introduce laws in any ways they want to, but I have to warn them, as we have been doing on a continuous basis, that unless they become better administrators with respect to individual rights and rights of groups in our society, they will fail.

Now I want to move into the area, for example, of the Workers' Compensation Board. It's funny because the other day something new came out from the infamous Bill 26. Isn't it strange that there is something very hidden in there? Bill 26 was so big, so huge, that something escaped everybody, and I think it was reported in one of the papers the other day. It's with respect to equity in women's pay. Not only have we now eliminated practically every right the worker had; now we are dealing, as well, with equity in women's pay. This is a huge issue that I'm afraid is going to come back to haunt us and the government and governing body as well.

I'm going on for a couple of minutes because I want to mention a couple of important points. The government is going to any extent to accomplish this 30% promise they have made to the rich people — because the poor people are not going to see any money. They will do it, and they will not accomplish what they set out to do; that is, balance the budget fair and square and give 30% without causing chaos among our society. So they are going to any extent. Wait until we see some five permanent 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week casinos established in Metro here — in Ontario we already have two or three — and some 30,000 slot machines. Why? Because they need the money.

The funny thing is that whatever they are doing, they are not placing anything else to offset the consequences of these ill-thought-out rules and laws that they are

proposing. What do they have in place? Absolutely nothing. When we hear the government claiming that things are going well, that unemployment is down and employment is up, I have to say that unemployment is still at the same rate at which it was a couple of years ago. Don't take the credit for the number of new jobs being created, because this is due mainly, as one of the previous speakers said, to the stable government we have now in Ottawa, as we have had in the last few years, and the world economic situation, the US economy as well, and those are the main reasons.

The budget contains absolutely nothing with respect to improving our economy and creating jobs. We have fewer jobs today than we had a couple of years ago. This is not a deal that deserves support. I will not support it and I am sure the members of the opposition side will not support it either.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I just want to bring up two issues on the agenda that are very close to the Liberal caucus and present a real gap in government programs. One, of course, has to do with barriers to employment. We all know that Ontario welcomes tens of thousands of highly skilled immigrants each year. These newcomers are expected to integrate easily into our economy because their educational backgrounds, talents and professional experience, and technical skills are in high demand here.

However, many foreign-trained professionals and tradespeople find themselves unable to apply those skills here and are consequently forced to compete for low-skill jobs, jobs for which there are already more than enough qualified applicants. I'd like to quote, because this is directly related to the budget, from Ratna Omidvar, the executive director of Skills for Change:

"Our country, Canada, presents itself as a recruiter of skilled immigrants, but then it doesn't know what to do with them. We are not coming clean on this issue with the public. There is a body of anecdotal evidence but no statistics on what it costs the taxpayer in terms of lost opportunity."

The barriers to employment were recognized in 1989 by the previous government, then by the NDP government, and are also recognized today by the Conservative government. The question is of course, what has been done?

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In 1989, the provincial government report called Access, which was the Task Force on Access to Professions and Trades in Ontario, found that few professions were free from discriminatory practices, few professions were free from structural solutions and few professions were free from systemic barriers, including (1) lack of appropriate means to access professional qualification and experience received in other countries; (2) limited information about licensing requirements and unfair testing procedures; (3) inadequate technical language training, technical skills and retraining opportunities; and (4) insufficient or non-existent avenues for appealing decisions made by the licensing bodies.

What is the situation today? Little progress has been made to address these issues. Information remains decentralized; the assessment of credentials differs between



professional bodies and trade associations; unfairness in licensing procedures has been recognized but not eliminated; and retraining opportunities are scattered and often expensive.

The promise has been made by this government and previous governments to create what is necessary and essential to ensure that, when they come to Canada, those who have academic credentials and are trained professionals outside this country are not used to drive taxis, deliver pizzas or do other jobs of that kind when they have great academic credentials and are professionals.

The promise has been made that we are going to create an academic credentials assessment service. Quebec has it, and they have a wonderful immigration program, BC has it, Alberta has it and two other provinces are now instituting what's called the academic credentials assessment service. Ontario is lagging behind.

It is obvious that we need one solution, and the solution can be had tomorrow. All we need is to maintain and deliver on the commitment that I thought was made by the Minister of Citizenship when a leaked document that came out of that ministry in terms of Access said what we need to do. There is one thing we need to do, and that is, finally and quickly to create the academic credentials assessment service, because it is only fair and just. The promises were made when those people came to Canada that they would have adequate employment, yet in terms of sufficient bases to create the employment structure, to maintain the benefits and to maintain the resources that are essential, are we correctly using the resources these people are bringing with them from abroad when we employ them in these kinds of menial jobs when indeed they are true, honest, verified and bona fide professionals?

I say to you today, and our caucus says to this government, it is high time that you move in the direction of establishing this academic credentials assessment service, simply because it is fair, it is just and it is necessary. Let the word go out from this Legislature, not only to those who are waiting right now — I'm talking about 300 veterinarians who are at this door, waiting to be admitted, waiting for the door to open so they will be able to access and maintain a livelihood they were used to, either in the country of their birth or the country of immigration.

I think it is incumbent upon this Legislature and it is certainly incumbent upon this minister, in the document that has come from the ministry, even though it is a confidential document, to do what we need to do. It is clear that if we do not maintain this academic credentials assessment service, we're not only lagging behind but we're doing an injustice to those who have come here and who try to maintain their skills in Canada.

Finally, let me simply say this: The organization which is called Skills for Change has presented to the Ministry of Citizenship adequate and fair recommendations of how an academic credentials assessment service can be instituted and how those people who are waiting at the door in order to enter the professions and access these professions for jobs can indeed maintain a livelihood.

I expect today the Minister of Citizenship will hear these words and will know that there are hundreds of

people out there in different professions waiting to enter the door of adequate employment. I know not only this side of the House, as Liberals, but I think the NDP also would support the academic credentials assessment service. I only hope the minister will finally see that it is an essential document and that she is the one who is holding the door shut to all those who want to enter. So the question should be asked, why are you maintaining a shut-door policy? Open the door and let them in because —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Questions or comments?

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I would like to pick up and say to the member for Parkdale, who was talking about the problem of immigrants coming with professional services — of course, I've had veterinarians in my riding of St Andrew-St Patrick. I sympathize with their situation and I can say we are helping.

**Mr Gerretsen:** They need help. They don't want your sympathy.

**Mr Pouliot:** You've got about four pets to every house.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order; and the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Ms Bassett:** We are moving in this direction. I will talk to the Minister of Citizenship and Culture, and I have been talking about that, but in tandem with that it's very important that when immigrants come to this country, there are jobs to be had.

That's one of the areas and the main area that our government is working on by bolstering the economy. To hear the member for Yorkview speak, it was all gloom and doom. What has been happening in Ontario, as the member for Norfolk, my colleague here, pointed out, is that things are beginning to happen. He went through a whole level of statistics, a number of things. In fact, he was apologizing for having to list the good things that were happening, because there were so many on the list.

**Mr Pouliot:** He can't stand prosperity.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, come to order.

**Ms Bassett:** I want to say that one of the reasons we are beginning to see changes here in Ontario is because of our tax cut, which so many people on that side of the House are opposed to. There is no question that tax cuts stimulate the economy. They create jobs. They're beginning to promote confidence and they're encouraging consumer and business spending.

The antithesis of that is that high taxes hurt the economy and weaken revenues. The NDP government, as you on that side will remember well, imposed significant income tax increases. The basic income tax rate rose from 53% to 58% and the surtax rate was increased to 30%. I want to point out what your former leader Bob Rae said, and I have to read his quote: "Governments should focus whatever tax relief can be afforded on the lowest paid and give people every incentive to earn, work and learn."

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** What is most interesting is that those who are the very wealthiest in the province, the people in the most privileged positions, are those who will get the most money back from the income tax cut. So while at the Optimist Club, the kids and the



families there may not be realizing much of a change, at the Albany Club they will be noticing a major change. They're going to put the membership fees up at the Albany Club because there's going to be more money in the hands of rich people who belong to the Albany Club. So those fees have to go up.

When I have people asking me now, what happens is they say, "I read about Moody's and Standard and Poor's and all of these rating companies, and they're all saying something about borrowing money for a tax cut. I thought the tax cut I was getting would not affect the provincial finances. I have to say I'm sorry they have to borrow, as the Dominion Bond Rating Service said, up to \$5 billion to finance the tax cut. When you borrow that money, you have to pay interest on that, and that means the accumulated debt of the province is increasing."

So in the period of time in which the Conservative-Reform party is in power, the accumulated debt of the province is going to increase \$20 billion. One would have thought if they were going to give a tax cut out, they would at least wait until they had the balanced budget so they wouldn't have to borrow that money to give a tax break and they wouldn't have to slash and burn so many all of the vital services that the ordinary, average person in Ontario needs very much.

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**Mr Pouliot:** What the people on this side of the House are saying makes immense sense. How many times must we respectfully remind you that you pay your debt first? Then it enhances your capacity. Pay the deficit first, then pay your debt, and you get a better rate. Your line of credit is better. That's what all the economists are saying. But there again you're on the hook for your 30% tax cut because you call it progressive.

The member for St Andrew-St Patrick, the sponsor of this bill, with high respect, you can only eat one meal at a time, wear one set of clothes at a time, watch one television at a time. You must spread the good news, spread the wealth. You can do it by going to a sales tax cut, so Harry and Jane, who are working at the minimum wage level, trying to join the ranks of the middle-class, get a bit of a break. There are a heck of a lot more — most, unfortunately — of those people than Matthew Barrett. I wish him well, he's doing a good job, but he benefits. He makes over \$2.5 million a year. He saves hundreds of thousands — does it make any sense? — while we have people lined up at the food bank.

It's not only immoral, it is porcine. It is a disgrace. Not that we should punish those who have much — they're the shakers and movers, I'll grant them that — but they don't need it nearly as much as we need health, as we need education. Give your head a shake and do what's right for those who need to be like you, who aspire to a better future tomorrow.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I was listening to the member for Yorkview. I know this is the fourth two-minute response, so I'm just taking the time that is allotted to me. I was listening to the member for Yorkview when he was talking about education, and that's something that I think concerns all of us. I just want to read to him and everyone else what the Liberal red book of 1995 said:

"Sixteen cents out of every provincial dollar and an average of 55% of property taxes are spent on education and training. We must make sure that we are getting value for our dollar. As much as possible, our education dollars must be spent on classroom learning rather than administration.

"The creation of a provincial core curriculum will save money by eliminating the need for individual boards of education to develop their own core curriculums.... which will help shift decision-making out of the hands of bureaucracies and into the hands of parents." That's what we're doing. "A Liberal government will further cut spending on administration" — that would be making a cut to education — "and get rid of waste and duplication by:

"Reducing the number of trustees" — that was in Bill 104, and they were against Bill 104 — "placing a cap on the salaries of trustees, and recognizing the part-time nature of the job;

"Clearly defining the role of school boards, publishing guidelines and spending on administration and asking boards to publish an annual report card comparing their administrative spending with provincial guidelines; and

"Encouraging school boards to increase efficiency in reducing costs by sharing expenses and looking for opportunities to share services with other public sector institutions."

The people in my riding — in fact, I was at a school council meeting on Tuesday night in my riding — are very happy with what this government is doing in education. They are very pleased with the curriculum. They believe that it's clear, it's going in the right way. I would ask the member for Yorkview to go and visit schools in his riding and see what they say, because in my riding they're in favour of education.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Yorkview has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Sergio:** I'm really honoured to have received so many comments from members of the House, and I especially enjoyed the last one. Let me state what you have done with respect to education, because I think this is the crux of the equation, the thing that you people fail to understand. You know it and you fail to understand with respect to education.

This is what you have done so far with respect to education: You have practically eliminated, cut, 25 school boards and cancelled junior kindergarten classes. You have eliminated 23 boards and reduced special education programs. In 44 boards you have reduced transportation services. In 42 boards you have cut the custodial and maintenance budgets. In seven boards you cut libraries; and now another user fee is going to come into the picture with respect to using libraries.

As to the first comments with respect to health care, "My goodness, we never said we would close any hospital." So far, there are 23 hospitals slated for closure. You will have to render some idea at the end of what you have done up to now and what you are going to do at the end. Some 12 emergency wards are scheduled to close. This is what you're giving to the people, let alone the downloading and user fees about which you people will have to respond to taxpayers, let alone the homeless.



There is a list of 30,000 people waiting out there to get some reasonable accommodation.

So please, don't come into the House and lecture all the time that you're doing wonderful things. You have to tell the people out there what you are doing from health care, to hospitals, to education, to the homeless. I will let my colleague from Parkdale have the last 10 seconds.

**The Acting Speaker:** Sorry, you can't do that. You had to complete it. Further debate?

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** It's a great pleasure to join in this debate this afternoon. It is always a pleasure especially to debate something as important of the budget of the province of Ontario, because that of course, as the opposition well knows, sets the direction for the province, both fiscally and in terms of priorities in spending over the next year, and I am pleased to add my overlay on this very important bill.

Obviously a lot of the debate this afternoon has focused on the tax cut and its relative importance to the Ontario economy. I want to dwell a little bit on the tax cut as well, but I want to do so from the point of view that the tax cut is not an end in itself. I want to stress that for those who perhaps are viewing the parliamentary channel. It is a means to an end, and the end of course is we want to create jobs and opportunity in Ontario. That is why we are doing all that we said we would do in the Common Sense Revolution policy document, to get to the goal of greater jobs, greater opportunity.

**Mr Bradley:** Is this what you said in the Reform campaign?

**Mr Clement:** The honourable member is talking about other campaigns, but I want to concentrate on what is important for the people of Ontario, unlike what the honourable member wants to talk about.

Clearly, we went through what we call 10 lost years in this province when other governments were in power when they tried other means to the goals that I'm sure they share. They, as well, want to see an economy where jobs are created. Their solutions were: "Tax more. Spend more. If there's a problem, surely there must be a government solution."

We tried that as a province for 10 years: 65 tax increases, including 11 personal income tax hikes; a doubling of the debt and a tripling of the deficit in that period of time. That method was tried. We gave it our best shot as a society. But out of that, out of tripling the deficit, doubling the debt, 65 tax hikes, we had more unemployed, more people on welfare, more people using the food banks. Our streets were not as safe for our men, women and children. Our education system was at risk in terms of the excellence required to succeed in the future competitiveness of the world, and indeed our health care system was put at risk. So we tried that.

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**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I was just wondering if you would ascertain whether there is a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Can you check and see if there's a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Brampton South.

**Mr Clement:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I clearly have to do a better job of enthralling my colleagues on both sides of the House. I will endeavour to do so.

To quote, "The hardest thing in the world to understand is income tax." Albert Einstein said that. Now, Albert Einstein was known as a learned man in many fields and was seldom baffled by anything, but he was baffled by income tax. I share his bafflement sometimes. When income tax is overlaid and increased and augmented over a number of years, it has the net impact of doing far less, in fact the reverse, of what the originators intended it to do.

My colleague from Norfolk mentioned tax freedom day being some time in July in the Dominion of Canada. That compares not very favourably with some other tax freedom days I've managed to research. Tax freedom day in Singapore is March 4; in the United States of America it's April 11; in Japan it's April 12; in Australia, socialist Australia, it's April 25; in Spain, again a socialist government for 12 or 14 years, it's May 5; Switzerland's, known for its welfare plans and social welfare state, is May 6; in Britain — of course, they went through a Thatcherite period, but I understand Tony Blair has promised not to increase taxes — it's May 9. Finally, we get into the company we're keeping right now, with such countries as France, Italy and Belgium, which are going through amazing social upheavals right now because their taxes and spending were all out of whack. That gives you a bit of an example of the company we're keeping rather than the company we want to be in.

The honourable members are making a lot of points today about how the tax cut, in their view, brings us further away from the ultimate goal, which they at least mouth, of balancing the budget. That argument is expressed a great deal by the naysayers. They're quoting economists; you get two economists in a room and you get three opinions, so I'm wondering about the value of that, but that is the depth to which they have sunk.

Let me at least put forward the argument in this House, which is evidenced in the budget, that the tax cut indeed pays for itself by creating the jobs and the opportunity our economy needs. It will generate the revenue growth that will pay for itself and get us closer to the balanced budget earlier than the track we were on before. There are a number of examples I can cite — and will cite because I have the floor — where this has occurred. I'll look at a couple of examples to the south of us and then I'll look at a couple of examples in Canada.

I look to the state of Michigan, where in one budget the governor of the state of Michigan, a fellow by the name of Engler, cut \$2 billion in one budget, just in one budget. He eliminated over 2,000 obsolete and burdensome regulations. This was a state that was almost entirely dependent on the auto industry for 75 years. Suddenly, with some of the cuts they did in terms of their budget, spending within their means for the first time, the industry began to diversify. They had 21 separate tax cuts. Suddenly, since 1991 employment has climbed by over



500,000 persons, and in 1995 one out of every five new manufacturing jobs in the United States was created in the state of Michigan. Personal income has climbed 25.9%, the fastest in the nation. One of their major concerns right now is finding enough workers to fill the jobs in this booming economy. Would that we had such a problem in Ontario.

Let me talk about Massachusetts, a state that was governed by Democrats for a number of years. The Kennedys are from Massachusetts, and that was the state of that very successful American politician, Governor Dukakis. Dukakis, faced with what was called a fiscal Beirut, imposed a \$1-billion emergency tax increase to try to stem the damage. Well, that didn't work. A fellow by the name of William Weld won in 1990 on the platform of "Tough on taxes, tough on crime." At the time, the deficit was the equivalent of a \$200-billion deficit at the federal level. Weld immediately cut tax rates across the board, accompanied by government downsizing. Economic activity surged and tax receipts ran ahead of predictions. And what did he do? He cut taxes again. He has cut tax rates 15 times, with theoretical savings of up to \$1 billion for the taxpayers, and because of the supply-side effect, tax revenues have actually moved ahead at 5% a year, unemployment fell from 9.6% in 1991 down to 4.5% in July 1996 and over 200,000 new jobs have been created in the process.

Just to have a little bit of balance, what happens when taxes are raised? In the state of California, a Republican governor, Governor Pete Wilson, acted more like a Liberal Democrat in that jurisdiction. He imposed an \$8.3-billion tax increase, or about \$1,000 annually for the average family of four. The budget itself increased by 10%, economic activity declined, and with the increase in taxes, tax revenues fell by \$5.9 billion. Taxes go up, revenues fall; taxes go down, revenues go up. That is the example in the United States of America.

In the province of Alberta, they are the fastest-growing economy. We are trying to catch up as fast as we can to the growth rate in terms of jobs and opportunity in Alberta. They of course have the lowest tax rates.

Let's look at the 1997 Ontario budget, shall we? I want to draw to your attention, because I like to do things from the facts as they are stated rather than hyperbole and rhetoric, to the economic outlook for Ontario as described in the Ontario budget. I refer the honourable members to page 21, for those who are following along. I know the honourable member from Kingston has a budget in front of him.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** That's not the red book, John.

**Mr Clement:** That's not the red book, honourable member, it is the budget. There is an interesting chart there that looks at the disposable income for average Ontarians: people in my riding of Brampton South, people in the honourable member's riding, I'm sure, who are working very, very hard to earn a dollar and save a dollar for themselves and for their kids, to get a little bit ahead by working a little bit harder. After the tax cuts are fully implemented, the real, personal, disposable income goes from around \$155 billion up to \$170 billion.

That extra amount may not seem like a lot to people who are used to spending billions of government dollars,

but for the average taxpayer, that is a large amount of money. For the average taxpayer in Brampton it's over \$2,000 a year; a \$2,000-a-year increase, the first raise they've had, because government was always taking away their raises, always making disposable income decline, so that despite working harder and harder, they could not either save for a rainy day or pay off the mortgage or pay off the car loan.

The honourable member from Kingston is following along, so I would also refer him to page 34. There's a very interesting point here. His colleague the honourable member for Scarborough-Agincourt has almost made a political career, I would dare say, talking about how when we decrease taxes, we are decreasing government revenues. In fact, that was a theme that was picked up today. But page 34 deals with the revenue outlook. I refer you to the numbers, honourable members and Madam Speaker, because they tell a different story than the story the opposition parties are telling. They say that if you looked at the standardized tax revenue, it went from \$36.730 billion in 1995-96 up to \$37.394 billion in 1996-97.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** He's going to have me in the poor house.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, you have to withdraw the comment you made, please.

**Mr Pouliot:** What, that he's driving me into the poor house?

**The Acting Speaker:** No.

**Mr Pouliot:** If I had a bank account with that person, I would withdraw everything.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon —

**Mr Pouliot:** I withdraw, and I apologize to the member.

**1800**

**Mr Clement:** I have been accused of a great number of things in my short parliamentary career, but to drive him to the poor house would be something that even I couldn't accomplish. I want to assure you of that.

Even the actual interim numbers indicate that with a \$2-billion tax cut thus far, revenues have gone up by at least \$2 billion. For those following at home, there is a recognition that next year there will be a slight decrease in PIT numbers, but that is because the numbers for this year, when they were standardized, were higher than the government had even projected. That is why there's a slight decrease. I have every confidence in our Finance minister that those revenue numbers on personal income tax will be higher, even with the tax cut, than we project. We're fairly conservative in our projections because that's the way good managers of the province of Ontario should be.

The proof is in the numbers. The proof is in the examples I have cited in other jurisdictions, that this policy, as embodied in the tax cuts, in the regulatory changes to make sure our businesses thrive, in allowing people more choices in their lives, in everything from our social welfare reforms to our reforms in education to our child welfare reforms — all those things added together create an environment where people succeed, not only for themselves but their children too.



That is an Ontario worth fighting for, and that is why this government is not for turning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mr Gerretsen:** The one table he didn't refer to is on page 132, if you'd like to follow along, which clearly states that in 1995 the public debt of this province was \$100 billion and by the year 2000 it will be \$120 billion, an increase of \$20 billion. That is all caused because of your tax cut, sir.

He also didn't give us the figure on the expenditure side, on page 64, which clearly states that the interest on the public debt is increasing from \$7.1 billion to \$9.1 billion a year in a matter of three years, an increase of \$2 billion on the interest we're paying on the public debt in this province, money which could be much better off in people's pockets, money which could be much better used to actually pay down the debt, if only it weren't for your tax cut.

There is nobody in this House who wouldn't agree with a tax cut. The question is, when? The question is, can we afford it? We simply cannot afford it right now. You always like to talk about business. I know of no business that loses money and still gives their customers or the people who work for them a bonus or dividend. It just doesn't work that way. When you're still in the red each and every year, you cannot cut the revenue side of the picture. Sure, there may be more revenues coming into the province coffers because hopefully there are more people working, but certainly not as many as you claimed you were going to get working in the Common Sense Revolution.

You indicated that you'd find 145,000 new jobs per year. Sir, over the last two years, you are about 156,000 jobs short of that amount.

**Mr Pouliot:** What an irony. I guess if you say something loud enough and often enough and don't listen to the positive criticism of the pundits, people who make it their business to know about these affairs, you can believe, with your blinkers on, that you're forever and forever right.

No other jurisdiction and no other province — seven out of 10 are deficit-free and they're now starting to go after the debt. Then they will perhaps cut taxes. The federal government has had the same choices: Do we go after the deficit to give us more latitude, do we go debt-free, or do we cut taxes mainly for the rich?

The bond rating agencies have perused your books. They've conducted due diligence, have pored over Ontario's books. They make it their business to assess the capability of large borrowers. It doesn't make too much sense. If the revenues are up, why all the cuts to social services? Why have most of the ministries — some of them have been gutted — suffered substantial cuts? Why the downloading to municipalities? Why? If the money is filtering through, why doesn't it create jobs for those aged 16 to 24? Why do you have user fees when you said you didn't have any?

The pain out there paints a different picture, the anxiety, the uncertainty. Sure a tax cut, but to the magnitude of 30%? Ronald Reagan cut taxes. The legacy still lingers.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mrs Marland:** I want to congratulate the member for Brampton South. That was a very interesting debate on this bill because it brought into this chamber excellent comparisons about what has worked and what is happening in other jurisdictions.

I would like to say that the member for Beaches-Woodbine was perfectly right when she corrected me when I said earlier this afternoon that we have created 3,000 jobs a day for the last three months. She said, "You always say government doesn't create jobs," and she is perfectly correct. We don't say that government creates jobs. What we say, and I'm proud of the fact that we not only say it but are actually doing it, is that we have created a climate in this province where jobs are being created.

It's interesting. We hear, as we just heard from the member for Lake Nipigon, that what we have done is gut this and this and this, in terms of the examples he gave. When you talk about gutting civil service jobs, it's a pretty indefensible argument. It is never written that the responsibility of government is to be an employment agency.

The responsibility of government is to make sure we serve our electorate, in this case the people of this wonderful province of Ontario. It's not our responsibility to have people on the payroll when we can deal with less, because every single cent of that payroll is paid for by the hardworking people of the province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Brampton South has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Clement:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to thank my colleagues in the Legislature, the member for Kingston and The Islands, the member for Lake Nipigon and the member for Mississauga South for their comments on my comments.

Just a couple of brief points: The member for Kingston and The Islands is asserting that we cannot afford the tax cut. The fact is that we cannot afford not to have a tax cut. The fact is that we need to have jobs and opportunity back in our economy. We need to have some revenue flow for businesses, people spending some of their hard-earned money by themselves rather than government spending it for them. That is why the tax cut is so necessary for the average Ontarian in our economy and for the economy as a whole.

The member for Lake Nipigon mentions that seven out of 10 other jurisdictions in Canada have concentrated on the deficit fight, just as we are concentrating on the deficit fight. There's no question that you have to concentrate on the deficit fight. But other jurisdictions in Canada had a spending problem; we in the province of Ontario inherited a spending problem and a taxation problem because of 65 tax hikes in 10 years. We had almost double the challenge that other jurisdictions had. Whereas Alberta had the lowest tax rates in the country — they could concentrate on the spending problem — we had to simultaneously concentrate on the spending problem and the tax problem.

May I put it into perspective. At the end of this entire exercise we will have taxation rates and spending in terms of government spending that are no less than when



Bill Davis was Premier of Ontario. I believe Bill Davis ran this province pretty well and could spend money in a way that was for the benefit of all Ontarians, and that is the standard Mike Harris and this government are setting for the province of Ontario.

1810

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerretsen:** Certainly the last two speakers have given all of us something to think about. Just getting back to the member for Mississauga South's position as to what the responsibility of government is, I would agree with her that the primary responsibility of government is not to put people on the payroll. No, the primary responsibility of government is to make sure that all its citizens and residents are dealt with in a fair way, that everyone has an equal right to an education in a fair and open way, that everyone has an equal right to health care and that people do not have to subject themselves to a two-tier health care system we're rapidly going to in this province, that everyone has an equal opportunity and a chance at life and the better things in life, to get a job and to contribute to this society. That's what government should be all about.

I can tell you that from where I sit there's no bigger issue than the issue we're dealing with right now, and that is the issue of your 30% tax cut. If your 30% tax cut is such a good idea, why didn't you make it 40%, 50% or 60%? The argument just doesn't hold any water at all while we're still running an annual deficit in this province. If the public debt in this province is going up by \$20 billion over the next five years, it's all because of your tax cut. If you had taken the position, "Let's get the deficit down to nothing and we've got to make these drastic cuts in all these areas," then at least some people would have said, "At least they're trying to get their financial house in order and under control." But you cannot cut off the revenue side of things at the same time as you're trying to bring the deficit under control. That is simply not possible.

Coming back to the earlier point that was made about the 725,000 jobs, there are at least two references to it in your so-called Common Sense Revolution in which this same Conservative model tells us, "This plan will enable our economy to grow by more than 725,000 jobs — real, lasting and productive employment opportunities for all Ontarians." By taking the 725,000 figure over the life of your mandate, which is five years and it may very well only be four years, you're promising at least 145,000 jobs per year. If you take it over a four-year period, it's even more than that. You are running short of that and many people in Ontario are suffering as a result of that.

The other thing I'm sure the people of Ontario have observed is this total naysaying attitude you're bringing to this exercise. We ask about cuts to health care. "No, it's not happening," the Minister of Health says on a day-to-day basis. It's the same thing with education, "No, we're not making any cuts to education." As far as you're concerned, you're bringing that \$12-billion deficit down, right now around \$6 billion or \$7 billion, but you're not making any cuts. These are the kinds of answers you're giving to questions here on a day-to-day basis.

Let's take a look at your budget document. What does it say exactly — this is your budget document — about the kinds of cuts you're making in these various areas? Let's just take a look at that. Let's take a look at education and training and see what's happened there.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** The figures I've got in front of me out of your document show that there has been, even according to your figures, at least a \$1-billion cut in education over the last two years. You can't have it both ways. You can't tell the people of Ontario on the one hand, "We're not cutting education and we're putting just as much money back," and have your budget document say something to the contrary, where you've gone from a figure of \$8.6 billion in provincial expenditures to \$7.7 billion, almost a \$1-billion cut. You cannot have it both ways.

We've identified the areas where you've been cutting, like the junior kindergarten program where you've cut \$145 million. Study after study has clearly indicated that for every dollar that you put into early childhood education you are going to save \$7 in social welfare costs somewhere along the line over the next 20 years.

I see the Minister of Community and Social Services and I hope she agrees with that. If she does, she should be fighting for it. If we want to make sure that we take people off welfare or that we don't create another generation of welfare recipients in this province, then we should be funding these kinds of programs. You have been cutting it. Your own figures in your own budget document clearly show that.

It's the same thing with respect to adult education. This is another one that absolutely gets me. Adult education is intended for those individuals who, for whatever reason — and it may very well have been their own fault. I'm not saying it is, but I'm sure there are isolated cases where it's their own fault and they checked out of the education system while they were teenagers.

They now realize that for them to get the necessary life skills and job skills, they need to get that education when they're in their early 20s. What you're basically doing by cutting off the funding for that program is that you're telling those people: "I'm sorry, but you are now going to lead a lifetime of menial jobs. This province is not going to give you the kind of opportunity. You had that once. You lost it. It's just too bad." That's not the compassionate society that I know Ontarians to be or that I know Canadians to be, or the kind of reputation that we have around the world. If not, why are you cutting \$150 million out of adult education? Why don't you tell the people of Ontario that? Why do you still stonewall with the notion: "Oh, we're not cutting. Those people have an equal opportunity." Well, they don't. Your own budget document indicates that in the billion-dollar cut in education costs.

How about the \$163-million cut in classroom spending? You can't fool the people of Ontario. They're not going to believe all of the savings in your education budget are in administration. They can see the class sizes their kids are subjected to on a year-to-year basis growing by five or six students. How can that teacher now give the same kind of attention to each of the students if there are five or six students more? It just doesn't work. At



least be honest and up front about it and say to the people of Ontario: "Rightly or wrongly, this is the decision we have made. The decision we have made is that we believe there's absolutely nothing wrong in larger classroom sizes." Then at least the people of Ontario would know where you stand on it, but you're still into denial. You're still saying —

**Interjection:** The Liberal way.

**Mr Gerretsen:** The member opposite is saying "the Liberal way." I'm talking about being honest with the people of Ontario and telling them right up front what your actual policies are, and you can't stonewall.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** I see the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is here, and now let's deal with him. His funding has been cut by \$666 million. The support grants that the municipalities, particularly the smaller rural municipalities, used to depend on are gone. You've cut it out. Ask the local councils, "Are you still getting the municipal support grants?" and they will say, "No, we're not getting it any more." Even as a result of the deal you have made with AMO, the municipalities are still \$600 million short. You know who's going to pay that freight? You and I and the many other property taxpayers in this province.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** I wonder if I could ask for some order, Mr Speaker. They're obviously not paying attention. This is obviously hurting them. They cannot stand hearing the truth like this. The local tax dollars in this province, the local taxes that property taxpayers are going to be paying, are going to be a minimum of 5% or 10% more because of your downloading programs.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** No wonder you got the flip flop.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Oh, Mr Minister, you've been in denial for two years.

*Interjections.*

1820

**Mr Gerretsen:** Let's take a look at the transportation budget and what's happening there. What they did there is they decreased it by \$300 million. I can tell you the people of Ontario aren't going to be all that happy when you have dumped most of the roads on to the local municipalities and you have basically said, "They're now your responsibility. We're through with them," and you've cut \$300 million out of the transportation budget — you look like a real bunch of heroes doing that — until every road in this province has got so many potholes in it that people don't know whether it's safe to drive on them or not, as many of the roads already are.

Let us just go on. The other one, as I mentioned before, is the interest on the public debt. We're paying \$2 billion more than we did three years ago. Why is that? Because the public debt is still rising. It may not be rising as quickly as it was before, but it's still rising by some \$6 or \$7 billion projected this year.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Where do we get the momentum? The Liberals or the NDP?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I'm very pleased that these members are so interested in it that they simply have to resort to

the kinds of shenanigans that they're involved in right now to make their point.

I suppose the real tragedy of this whole situation is this: The number of children in poverty in Ontario is still rising. Nineteen per cent, nearly one in five children in this province, are living below the poverty line.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. It's out of order to interject or make interruptions. If you feel it's necessary to say something and talk to somebody, then I wish you'd leave voluntarily. It will save me doing it for you.

**Mr Gerretsen:** The fact that one in five children in this province lives below the poverty line I don't think is a laughing matter no matter what side of the House you sit on. I think this is something we should collectively do something about. I see the Minister of Community and Social Services is here and it's something she should be doing something about.

Rather than cutting \$17 million out of the CAS budgets of this province, it would be a heck of a lot better if you took that money you're giving to the people that are making \$100,000 or more, the \$2,500 per year in a tax cut, and did something about the eradication of child poverty in this province.

You can shake your head no, but I would think there would be unanimous consent in this House. Surely there isn't a child in this province, in this bountiful country that has so much to offer to so many people, who should live below the poverty line. If you don't believe that, my friends, then I'm afraid that you live on a different planet than I do.

**Mr Klees:** Tell us about the poverty line..

**Mr Gerretsen:** You will have your chance, sir, when you get up to speak.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Are you suggesting that the poverty line is too high? Is that what you're suggesting?

**Mr Klees:** Tell us what it is.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You know quite well what it is, sir, and I'm not going to —

**Mr Newman:** Do you know?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I darn well know.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the member for York-Mackenzie come to order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Talking about equal opportunity towards education, let's take a look at what has happened with respect to tuition fees in this province just over the last three years. Back in 1994-95, the average student —

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It would be very helpful if the honourable member, who is referencing his comments to the poverty line, could define what that poverty line is for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. If that gentleman would like that information, he knows where to get it.

The point still is that —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** If they are suggesting that there are not children in this province who live below the poverty line,

as defined by Statistics Canada, one in five children in this province, then obviously —

**Mr Klees:** That's not answering the question. Tell us the facts.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I'm dealing with the facts. These are Statistics Canada facts.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. There are several members. Maybe pangs of hunger that are calling you, but please don't make me interrupt the proceedings. It's lively debate and indeed it should be vigorous. Please don't spoil it by having yourselves removed. Would you bring yourselves to order, please.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I certainly concur with you that the decorum in this place right now is pretty bad. One of the reasons, of course, is because I think these members are finally hearing the truth on some of these major issues that concern the people of Ontario. Obviously, that doesn't make them very comfortable and I don't think it makes them very comfortable either when you look at what it costs to go to university and compare that, as far as tuition fees are concerned, with what our students were paying even three years ago. Three years ago, it was \$2,200 on the average; now it's almost \$3,400 per year on the average.

Some of you may say: "So what? I'll take another thousand bucks out of the bank and pay it." But there are many, many students who simply don't have that ability and we are, for the first time in about 30 years, once again starting to deny people who have the academic qualifications but who simply do not have the economic resources to get a university or college education. If that's something that you think you're proud of, then again you live on a different planet than I do.

**Mr Klees:** What planet are you on?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I live in Ontario, sir, an Ontario that's caring and compassionate, and you are very quickly ruining that sense of compassion, the fact that there's an equal opportunity for people to get an education and have an equal access to health care and an equal opportunity to enjoy the better things in life, including having a job.

If you are proud of the fact that Ontario now ranks 46th in North America — in all the jurisdictions in North America, out of 60 jurisdictions, 46th in the amount of the money that the province is spending with respect to education — I can tell you I'm not proud of that. Just within the last three years, we've dropped from being 29th to 46th.

**Mr Klees:** You want to spend more.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Yes, I want to spend more on programs like junior kindergarten that you have completely cut and eliminated, and I want to spend more money on adult education so that you can give people a real chance and a real opportunity in life. If you didn't have your idiotic tax cuts, you actually could be giving people an equal opportunity in life, which is something that you're totally and absolutely denying.

Getting back to the children below the poverty line, let's just take a look at the children, and this is according to the statistics provided by the food banks in this city, in the greater Toronto area. In 1995 something like 42,000 children were dependent on food banks. What is it one

year later? It's 70,000. Is that a figure that you're proud of? It's not a figure that I'm proud of, I can tell you that, and it's not a figure that many Ontarians are proud of.

You talk to the average person in this province and they will openly admit to you that the disparity between the haves and the have-nots of this province has escalated at an ever-rapid rate over the last two to three years. We would be a heck of a lot better trying to do something about that so that we could bring back real prosperity, not just prosperity for the few, to this province. I think we would be doing ourselves and our children a big favour, and that's not happening right now.

Let's take a look at one of the other — the Minister of Economic Development is here. That's another interesting budget. I don't know what he's minister of because his budget sure is shrinking. Let's take a look at economic development. Back in 1994-1995, according to their own budget document, they spent something like \$463 million in their area. Do you know what it is now? It's \$201 million, a decrease of something like 50% or 60%, and the minister stands here today and says, "I am now announcing that from now on, every year, we will have one week which will be known as Tourism Awareness Week."

I've got news for you, Minister: I've been involved on the public scene for 25 years and they've had a Tourism Awareness Week in Ontario for at least 25 years. It's nothing that you came up with; there's nothing new about that. It has existed for the last 25 years, and I think many of us in this chamber on all sides of the House would openly agree with that. What have you created today? Nothing. Just another sort of feel-good announcement that doesn't mean anything, because it has been around for years.

**1830**

This is the minister who's stopping the funding of all the tourist sites that the province has any involvement with. You know what I'm talking about. For example, let's take a look at a place like Fort Henry, which is located in my riding. It's a main tourist attraction which attracts 200,000 to 300,000 people per year. What's the decision that's been made? "We're not going to fund you any more. Goodbye, Charlie Brown. You look after it yourself." Now if you think that —

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** We're working with them. It's going to work out better.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Yes, you're working with them to see how you can unload the operation. It's exactly the same thing as the Ministry of Transportation is doing with respect to the three islands in my riding. It has caused at times some merriment in this House, but I can tell you there's no merriment as far as the 2,000 people who have lived on those islands, in many cases for the last seven or eight generations, and they've just been cut off unilaterally. They've been told, "As of January 1, you find your own way to your jobs and to the mainland," as if they aren't part of this province any more. That's the kind of government you've been giving.

There are very well known Conservatives in my own riding who can't believe they elected a kind of Reform government that would do that kind of thing, to unilat-



erally say to people, "You don't count any more." They've got absolutely no tax base, and in order for them to come to the mainland and do their jobs or be involved in educational opportunities, they would have to raise their taxes seven-, eight- or tenfold in order to get back and forth. Of course the minister is working with them as well to give them the key to the board and say at the end of the year, "Now it's your problem and we don't care how you're going to raise the money."

That is not the Ontario I'm used to from Bill Davis, John Robarts, David Peterson or Bob Rae. The one thing you have to recognize once you're in government is that now you're no longer in government just for your friends or for your supporters. You are in government in order to govern all the people in Ontario, all 10 million irrespective of political stripe or philosophy or where they live. You cannot just unilaterally cut 2,000 people off and say, "You're no longer our responsibility; it's now a local responsibility," and then try to make the local residents even feel good about it.

It is just awful what's happening to this province, and this budget bill that we're approving here tonight, the 30% tax cut, is the essence of it because that's where it all starts.

As I mentioned before, if the government had said, "Look, folks, we've all got to bring this deficit down and we want to wipe it out and then we can start talking about tax cuts or we can start talking about funding some newer programs that will help people in one way or another," I think an awful lot of people in this province would say, "Yes, I can go along with that."

But to implement a tax cut at a time when we're still running a deficit and increasing the public debt of this province and increasing the amount that's required on an annual basis to service that debt, an additional amount of \$2 billion per year just in the last two to three years, is totally indefensible. It's for that reason and many, many others that have been enunciated by other members in our caucus that we intend to vote against this bill most vehemently.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate? No? Would the parliamentary assistant, the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, like to wrap up?

**Ms Bassett:** I want to thank everybody who's participated in the debate this afternoon and in the days prior to this. I think we have said this afternoon what we meant to say all along with this bill, doing what we said we were going to do and the evidence is all around us.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mrs Bassett has moved second reading for An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30 — yes, Mr Leadston?

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to defer this vote until immediately following question period Monday, June 23.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? It is agreed.

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I believe there's unanimous consent to proceed with second and third reading of Bill 127.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Is it the pleasure of the House? It is agreed.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The agreement, and this is what I want to clarify, is that we will have second reading, and if that is completed, we will go to third reading. Is that agreed? It is agreed.

## EXPANDED NURSING SERVICES FOR PATIENTS ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR L'EXTENSION DES SERVICES INFIRMIERS À L'INTENTION DES PATIENTS

Mr Hudak, on behalf of Mr Wilson, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Nursing Act, 1991 and to make consequential amendments to the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act, the Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991, the Respiratory Therapy Act, 1991 and the Vital Statistics Act / Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les infirmières et infirmiers et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur la protection contre les rayons X, à la Loi de 1991 sur les technologues de laboratoire médical, à la Loi de 1991 sur les inhalothérapeutes et à la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil.

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I have moved second reading of Bill 127, which will legally recognize the contribution of nurse practitioners to health care in Ontario. I think this is a very important piece of legislation to address before we rise for the summer recess.

This legislation is a key component of primary care reform and for this government's commitment to supporting a high-quality, integrated health care system that puts patients first. Health care services are delivered by many different types of professionals in many health care settings.

Nurses are key providers of health care services and we have now in Ontario approximately 250 nurse practitioners practising safely and have had for more than 20 years now. In that time, in the 20 years with 250 practitioners, not one complaint has been made to the College of Nurses of Ontario about their practice. Up until now, before this bill, nurse practitioners have had to function within a complex system of shared legal accountability with physicians. This has required both nurse practitioners and physicians to spend time developing enormous protocol manuals for each practice, time which could be much better spent on delivering care to patients.

Let me give you an example. Linda Jones, a nurse practitioner in the Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre, has shared her protocol manual with the minister's office. It runs over 300 pages in length and contains detailed descriptions of just what the nurse practitioner is expected to assess, tell patients and order in the way of lab tests and treatments for common ailments such as



sore throats, earaches and rashes. To talk about the amount of red tape involved, one protocol related to rashes alone, simply to rashes in the protocol, runs 12 pages in length.

1840

These protocol manuals are not used by NPs in everyday practice because frankly nurse practitioners know, by virtue of their education and experience, how to manage every one of these conditions described in the protocol manuals. These enormous paper trails currently exist solely for legal purposes because legislation does not exist which recognizes nurse practitioners currently in the province. All of this paper, 300 pages in length and 12 pages on rashes, is required to outline the scope of practice for the NP within each practice setting because we do not have legislation.

In addition, nurse practitioners are currently required to take time away from patient care to update these manuals for every change in current nursing practice, no matter how trivial. It's time away from treating patients. This is required so that the nurse practitioner and the physician that the NP works with are legally protected for what the NP is doing in her practice.

We want to eliminate all that red tape so that nurse practitioners and doctors can use their time to treat patients, not spend their time editing manuals and getting caught up in red tape, so that more patients can benefit from the unique knowledge and skills of NPs in health promotion and illness prevention. The Expanded Nursing Services for Patients Act that we're debating today will accomplish this goal.

The safety and effectiveness of the nurse practitioner role has been supported by extensive research. In fact, the role of nurse practitioners has been so thoroughly investigated with respect to its impact on patient and system outcomes that we feel confident that nurse practitioners are a good approach for this government to take to improve access to health care services for the citizens of Ontario. In this research, nurse practitioners have been shown to be highly effective in providing primary care to patients. In study after study, patients of NPs have been found to have similar outcomes to patients cared for by family doctors and to be highly satisfied with the care that they receive. In fact, in some cases the outcomes are even better.

Patients with chronic health problems have demonstrated better knowledge of their health problem and its management and are more likely to adhere to their medications and treatments when they receive care from a nurse practitioner. In some cases, due to better understanding, patients have taken their medications appropriately for the first time. Improved effects of medication have permitted dosages to be reduced or changed, with better therapeutic effects and fewer side-effects for patients.

This is particularly important in elderly patients, who often will require more time and expertise with patient teaching, skills which nurses have refined in their practices, and for seniors, who experience more hospital admissions for treatment of drug-related problems than younger persons.

Although this legislation introduces changes to support the primary care nurse practitioner, it also lays a foundation for the recognition of other forms of advanced nursing practice.

The creation of an extended class registry within the College of Nurses recognizes for the first time that there are generalist and specialist nurses and that it is in the public interest to regulate the practice of specialist nurses. These forms of advanced nursing practice create new employment opportunities for nurses within our health care system and new opportunities for patients and the system to benefit from the unique knowledge and skills of these nurses. As health care and the health care system become increasingly more complex, it is increasingly important that all the pieces work together effectively as a whole. The Expanded Nursing Services for Patients Act is an important part of achieving that goal because it will help physicians and nurses to work together to provide the most comprehensive care in Ontario.

We're here today as a result of more than two decades of positive experience with nurse practitioners in the system and a process of consultation which has involved many stakeholders, including the public.

This government has responded to the recommendations of stakeholders such as doctors and nurses, pharmacists and the public, to name just a few, in the drafting of this very important legislation. We believe we are on the leading edge of a wave of change in the roles which nurses can play in the health care system of the future. Citizens want better access to nurses and they expect nurses to assume more expanded roles in primary health care services. This is an important piece of legislation, without a doubt, for the nursing profession as a whole.

These are difficult times for nurses. Perhaps more than any other group, they are experiencing the impact of major change in our health care system. Restructuring of the system is not about saving money. It is about improving our valued health care system, putting the needs of patients first, and making sure the system can meet the needs of a growing and aging population.

Passage of this legislation before the House today will provide opportunities for nurses to contribute to patient care in an expanded professional role. The Expanded Nursing Services for Patients Act will improve access to first-class primary health care services for all citizens in Ontario. It also represents tangible evidence of the regard this government holds for the current and future contribution of Ontario nurses to the health care system. When all parts of the health care system are working together — hospitals, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals — to make high-quality care accessible now and into the future, we will have a health care system which truly puts the needs of the patients first.

Many of the improvements that have been made in health care are possible because of the advances in prevention, diagnosis and treatment of illness, and the range of services that are now available from well-prepared and dedicated health professionals. We want to help those professionals to collaborate more effectively by eliminating red tape that currently gets in the way of them delivering high-quality health care.



When we introduced this legislation for first reading on April 30, we had all-party agreement. I look forward again to all-party support as we move this bill forward this evening. In my opinion, the Expanded Nursing Services for Patients Act is an important bill for nurses and for the health care of all citizens of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** One thing you have to know is that when you're on the government side, all you have to be able to do is move your lips, because they provide all the necessary briefing notes on the government side. In the opposition, you actually have to think of what you're going to say; you don't just have to give the line. I'm not putting the member down — this is generic, this is universal — but it's always interesting to see. Someone once said that all you have to be able to do is move your lips on the government side, because you have to be careful you don't deviate from the government line.

Anyway, on this particular matter, I've been looking forward for a long time to this particular piece of legislation and it has been developed over a considerable period of time. Every government that has been in power recently has been beginning an initiative on this. It has finally come to fruition and will be implemented.

I know there will be many nurses who will be looking forward to this because 15,000 of them have lost their jobs or are in the process of losing their jobs in Ontario as a result of the hospital funding cuts we've seen. My two friends from the peninsula are over there. The Port Colborne hospital and the Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie are both vulnerable, of course, because of those cuts.

I know that the nurses who work there, including some who may even be daughters of people who have been recently appointed to the Niagara District Health Council, are concerned that their jobs might be lost as a result of the closing of those hospitals. These are people who were appointed at the insistence of the local member. I don't remember mentioning names in here, but Bill will know what I'm taking about if he happens to be watching this evening, I'm sure.

I'm going to look forward to the debate a little later on tonight.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I can just imagine being among the 15,000 health care providers, nurses, who were shown the door, who were pink-slipped, and hearing the cavalier comments vis-à-vis this bill. This is not red tape. We're talking about holistic health care, we're talking about community-based health care, better health care. It's as simple as that.

How can you on the one hand say it will make things better and yet your actions betray your words? There's a lot of anxiety, and anxiety has led to fear. When it comes to the most essential of service, that of your health, Speaker, our health, all of us, no one is immune. Inevitably we shall find ourselves on the waiting list. They will not listen to demographics. It's right in front of them. They should be able to predict what's coming and attach a timetable to it. They've turned their backs: not a helping hand; the back of the hand. Then, like instant

coffee, they would like us to pretend that we've buried the hatchet, that all is well.

Community after community is saying: "What gives here?" You made an agreement with the doctors. You've invited people to join the doctors and then you're not going to come across. You're pink-slipping people. You're putting the padlock on hospitals. The Liberals have said one or two examples and unfortunately with your agenda there might be more. It leads to that. The catastrophe of visiting a father to find that he was dead, dead, dead in the corridor. The health community says negligence of the highest order.

**1850**

**The Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** It's my pleasure to join in this debate on the questions and comments side and compliment the member for Niagara South for his comments.

I, for one, was poignantly made aware of where nurse practitioners can be made more available and more a part of our health care system. I happened to be in the delivery room of the local hospital, Peel Memorial Hospital, two weeks ago upon the occasion of the delivery of my third child. The doctor who has been our family doctor for all three of our children over the past six years unfortunately had a soccer tournament in Grimsby for his daughter at the same time as the delivery was taking place.

Those of you who have a number of children know that the third delivery happens somewhat more quickly than the first delivery. Certainly that was the case here where we were admitted to the hospital at 11 am and by 12 noon it certainly was very clear that we needed a little bit of assistance, that we were ready for the final stages of delivery. To the great commitment of the staff at Peel Memorial Hospital, there were two nurses who were there who were able to assist in the delivery of my third child. In fact, the delivery happened simultaneously with the entrance of the doctor, who walked into the delivery room just as the baby was born. I did not have the circumspection to ask whether he was actually billing for that particular procedure, but it was always good to have another observer there.

But it was made poignantly clear to me that nurses are integral to our health care system, that they have a lot of skills that should be made more available, that those skills should be more recognized, that there should be an education system and a standards system that would recognize those skills. I, for one, am looking forward to voting for this bill at the earliest available opportunity.

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I'd just like to comment that we really are in a crisis situation with the nurses and this bill really does nothing to help it.

As members will know, I've been involved with Branson hospital. I have been championing the cause of Branson hospital and one of the things that I've been able to determine is that, number one, nurses are being laid off. The hospital has not had any kind of provision for severance, so they've been committed to a huge financial obligation and this government is literally turning a blind eye to it and has done nothing to relieve that problem.



We have another situation. I am sure members will know that it was brought to the attention of this House just recently that at Northwestern hospital and, yes, even Branson hospital, because they have been slated to close, people are literally jumping ship. These hospitals are going to implode. Notwithstanding that they've been told they've got a year or two years before the closing actually takes place, what is happening is that doctors are saying: "Why should I possibly stick around in this hospital when we've been told it's not going to be around? I'm going to get myself another placement."

With that other placement you have a total deterioration of the system. You have nurses being laid off, so you don't have the support system. Patients come in and are told, "Make sure you have a relative with you to look after you because we don't have any staff to do it." You have a situation where doctors are saying, "We can no longer be guaranteed that we're going to have a practice here, so we better find a location somewhere else." As a result, you no longer have the necessary anaesthetists, you no longer have the necessary stocking of the emergency department, and before you know it, you have a hospital that, de facto, ceases to exist. That problem has to be laid squarely at the door of the —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Responses?

**Mr Hudak:** I'm pleased to respond to the comments from my fellow members here, and I appreciate their comments on the importance of this bill.

We are seeing a shift in health care from the institutional sector to more community-based care, care closer to home and in the home, where patients can recuperate better, be in better shape and back to good health more quickly. In fact, I think the signals point to a growth in jobs in nursing in the future. Great Britain is one that has already gone through it and I think they've experienced a shortage of nurses. Australia is another one ahead of us in the demographics. Soon Ontario, like the rest of Canada, will be experiencing that need, especially for university-educated nurses.

That's why this legislation is so important. If there are some young women and men out there who are interested in entering this field, it is an excellent education, to the point where there are more jobs out there for the nurse practitioners than there are nurse practitioners graduating from the education system. A survey done recently by the College of Nurses of Ontario shows this demographic, that currently 28.3% of the nurses registered are over the age of 50 and 15% are over 55 years of age. Knowing that very few nurses practise past the age of 60, this means in the near future a lot more jobs coming into the employment sector. In fact Edutrends, a study that recently came out in a national publication, said that nursing will rate second in the top 10 occupations in this and in the next decade.

So yes, there is a shift in the way that health care services are being delivered, but I would say closer to the patient and better quality care. That's why this legislation is so important to moving into the 21st century of health care and recognizing the vital role that nurses play in the health care system and finally, through legislation, recognizing that role so they can practise without going

through these mounds of protocol. I encourage members to support this bill.

**Mr Pouliot:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you kindly check the Toronto Club for a quorum, please.

**The Speaker:** I'm afraid I can't.

**Mr Pouliot:** Quorum, quorum. The House has got to be constituted with 20 members.

**The Speaker:** Oh, the House. Can you check for a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Member for Timiskaming.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I'm pleased to get up in my place today to speak on this bill. I wonder if I could ask permission to split my time with the member for St Catharines, as this would be a 90-minute leadoff.

**The Speaker:** This means you're seeking unanimous consent?

**Mr Ramsay:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent for the member for Timiskaming and the member for St Catharines to split their time?

**Interjection:** I don't know.

**The Speaker:** You can't say "I don't know." Either it's agreed or not. Agreed? Yes. Member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** Thank you, Speaker. I thank the members of the House for agreeing to that unanimous consent.

I can't remember in the two years of the Harris government actually getting up in my place and speaking in favour of a bill. This one I would say is a bill that's long overdue to do something in the health care system that, as the member for St Catharines said, was absolutely stolen from the Liberal platform, because we think, as did the previous government, which further re-regulated nurse practitioners, that making sure the most appropriate health care practitioner is delivering the most appropriate health care services is the way to maintain and run a proper health care system in the province, and nurse practitioners have been a vastly underutilized resource in the Ontario health care system. The previous government had recognized that we needed to move on, and you have too. It's unfortunate that we're not moving faster than we are, because as previous speakers have said, we have 15,000 laid-off registered nurses in Ontario from all the hospital closures and cutbacks in hospitals, and we really need to allow many of these nurses to do the necessary and required upgrading to become nurse practitioners.

1900

I'll tell you, especially from a northern perspective, why this is so important. It has been a chronic issue in northern Ontario, also in rural Ontario, and surprisingly now in many small towns in southern Ontario, that we have been for years underserved with medical practitioners, especially family doctors, and in some cases specialists. We have tried for years under successive governments to bring in incentives, to find ways of coercing and persuading family physicians especially to come to underserved areas, and while you might get an initial hit with an incentive program to bring people up,



in the end, people tend to leave these underserved area programs and we find ourselves, in rural and northern Ontario especially, not having the required number of doctors to service our population.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was wondering if you would check and see if there is a quorum.

**The Speaker:** Quorum, please.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present.

**The Speaker:** Member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** As I was saying, the issue of why we find ourselves in the chronic position of not having a sufficient number of doctors in our rural northern Ontario areas is very complicated. At one point about three years ago, I acted in our caucus as northern health critic and went on a fact-finding study throughout northwestern and northeastern Ontario to try to find some of these answers. It's really very complicated and not an easy problem to solve.

One of the reasons we find ourselves underserved is that a doctor will come up to one of these areas, and it is underserved to begin with. Therefore, the doctor immediately becomes overworked, because we don't have a sufficient number of physicians to share the work. So what happens is that a physician coming up to one of these areas gets burned out very quickly.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you check and see if there is a quorum?

**The Speaker:** Quorum, please.

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. These quorum calls will certainly try one's concentration.

One of the other aspects of why it's difficult to retain doctors in isolated areas is really the point of professional isolation. Unlike the southern Ontario teaching hospitals in communities where doctors are trained in this province, where you've got expertise in the next office and —

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: You can advise me as to whether this is a point of order or not. On the parliamentary channel, normally when there's a quorum call, the clock is also shown. That is within your jurisdiction, I think. During that last quorum call, the clock was not on the television parliamentary channel, and for those people who are trying to eat dinner so they can last till midnight, it's difficult for them to know how much time they have.

**The Speaker:** I'm not certain whether it's a point of order, but according to the rules, the clock is never shown for a quorum call; it's only shown for votes. That's why you didn't see it.

Member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** It's a great evening here at Queen's Park.

The other problem is professional isolation. As I was saying, when doctors learn their skills in the teaching

hospitals in southern Ontario, they have specialists next door and they have the latest of high-tech equipment down the hall in those hospitals. Then all of a sudden we ask them to come up to places like New Liskeard and Kirkland Lake in my riding, or Hornepayne or Dryden or Kenora, or even more isolated communities than that, and they are facing a very different type of medicine. The rural medicine they face is one of sole responsibility. They don't have a specialist to refer to next door or even in the same town.

What we have not been doing through our teaching is preparing our doctors for rural small-town medicine. We basically teach big-city medicine. That's the problem, so when doctors come to our smaller communities, they feel they don't have the support that they were trained to use. So it's very difficult to maintain our health care professionals in the north.

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I hate to interrupt the member, but would you check and see if there is a quorum?

**The Speaker:** Quorum.

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Now, where were we?

The problem is that we're not training our doctors to feel confident in small-town rural settings, because we are unable to provide them with all the expertise and the latest of high-tech, bells-and-whistles equipment in those towns. Part of the trouble there is that we need to have a rural medicine specialty option in our universities so that those doctors who would really like to work in some of the smaller communities in this province could do that, and do that with the confidence that they have had the additional support and training.

The other thing we need to do is increase our telemedicine facilities and make sure that we still have some rural hospitals, after all the hospitals that are being closed by this government, and that the proper supports are there for our medical staff. That's going to be very important.

**1910**

This all brings me back to the point of this legislation. One of the things we can do to help the situation is to look for other types of health care professionals to fill that gap, and nurse practitioners could fill a tremendous role in northern and rural Ontario in supplementing the job that our physicians do.

To get back to a little bit of detail about why I think it's important to use the most appropriate health care professional for the service, what happens in many of our communities, take wintertime in northern Ontario, is that you'll get a highly trained physician seeing 30 to 40 people with sore throats over a day. Quite frankly, that's an inappropriate use of a family physician, who has training far beyond that.

There is a tremendous role for people like nurse practitioners to handle those sorts of symptomatic diseases that are based seasonal occurrences like that, which could really take some of the load off our doctors. It would help the underserved areas by lightening that load for many of our physicians so they could be doing more highly specialized work in those communities, not



being burnt out by all the patients they need to see with colds and ear infections and these sorts of minor ailments, but could really be working on more specialized areas of care, working in the hospital more, freeing the general surgeon up to do the general surgery. So it's very important that we expedite this program.

I look at the statistics here and see that in Ontario at this time, we only have 250 nurse practitioners and only 33 are graduating this year. I know the previous speaker had said how important it is to get more of our nurses — because you have to start as an RN in order to enter the nurse practitioner program. What we need to be doing, and the government should be doing this, is funding more courses in the province, because they have to be funded by the government. Our universities need the money so they can offer more openings to so many of these laid-off nurses. We've got the people who want to get into the business, we have the demand for it, and yet we don't have the funding from the Ontario government to provide that.

The other point, of course, is the rising tuition fees that are happening here in Ontario. The Harris government has raised the tuition fees substantially now, making it more and more difficult for people to enter or to re-enter our post-secondary institutions in the province. It's incumbent upon the government to make sure there are a sufficient number of seats available for the nurse practitioner courses so that we can start to graduate more of these people, to get these men and women throughout the province and to make sure it's accessible, to make sure it's affordable and to move on quickly to either an income-contingent system or a new system of assisting many of these people who need, in this case, to go back to university to get this course.

That's our plea tonight from the Liberal caucus for sure, that they've got to get on with funding our universities. I have many requests from nurses in my area who want to go to the very good course provided by Laurentian University in Sudbury, their nurse practitioner program, but there are so few seats available in that program that there is a tremendous waiting list. So while nurses are lining up to take this course and while we're underserved in many parts of the province, our nurses who are being laid off by the Harris government can't get into these courses and take up a new career as a nurse practitioner.

This is a roadblock that needs to be corrected by this government. The ministry really has to make a commitment to the provision of funds so that RNs can take these courses, that they are affordable and that they are accessible.

One of the things that has been straightened out with this, that I think got off to a rough start previously, was what sort of function the nurse practitioner was going to take part in. I know when this first came out when Ruth Grier was the Minister of Health, the College of Physicians and Surgeons was quite upset about the initial introduction of this and even filed an application in the Ontario Court (General Division) for a judicial review, but since then that has been cleared up. I think doctors understand now that nurse practitioners can be a very effective partner in health care provision in Ontario. The

regulations have now been spelled out as to what are the functions of nurse practitioners in this province, and I think it's important that people understand the complementary nature of the function of a nurse practitioner with that of the family physician.

In order to make this really effective and to make this happen, it's incumbent upon the Ministry of Health to really invest in an extensive education program so that people understand there is a new health care professional on the scene who is able to provide many of the services we have traditionally relied upon family physicians for. That's really going to be a change of mindset for many people who feel that even when you have a minor ailment you have to go to a family physician or even a specialist. For minor ailments that is certainly not the case, and it's very important that the Ministry of Health embark upon an advertising program, an education program that would really let people understand the function of a nurse practitioner, that a nurse practitioner works in conjunction with the family physician, where these people are and how to access them, and that's it's as simple to access a nurses practitioner as it is a family physician.

When you talk to many of these nurses who have been laid off in the province — again, it's 15,000 nurses so far in Ontario who have been laid off because of the Harris government cutbacks — 81% of them say that patients are being put at risk because of these cutbacks, and when you talk to people who have been in hospital or who have relatives in hospital, it is quite apparent that one of the main problems with our hospitals today is the lack of nursing care. There just isn't the nursing care that used to be there, and I think when people get into hospital or find themselves there with a relative, only then do they really understand how important that front-line nursing care is to total patient care. Many people have told me they've had to go out and find their own nursing care and pay for that private care and bring that person into the hospital to provide some overnight nursing care, or as a family member, if they couldn't afford that, which most people can't, they have had to provide that nursing care on their own.

It's a real change out there, and it's a very different day from when in the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s we really developed a first-class health care system here in Ontario. Maybe we took for granted that if you or your relatives were in the hospital, there was nursing care there. Now you've got to make sure it is there, and if it is not, you have the responsibility to go out and get it yourself or provide it yourself. Many families find themselves in the hospital all night tending to maybe their parent or their child. That's a very different scenario. While many of the members across the way might think that's the way the health care system should be, most people today find that they have to be at a job. They have to be up in the morning and out at work, and they are not able to provide that nursing care for their family. Times have changed and we have to rely on the health care system to provide that nursing care for an ailing relative. That's very important.

Some 85% of nurses surveyed also say that the quality of patient care has declined. Again, that is because there



are so few nurses now on duty, especially on the over-night shifts but on the day shifts also, that these nurses are basically spread too thinly around the hospital. Many patients have said to me that when they have pressed the buzzer by their bedside looking for nursing care, the nurse is way down the hall tending to another patient, that there just isn't a sufficient number of nurses to provide the high quality of care required in our hospitals today. That is not a situation that we should accept at all. It's a shame that we have all these highly trained professionals sitting idly by now and not providing the nursing care.

1920

Some 76% of these nurses say their workload is unsafe. That's the other point here. Not only is there so much work that the nurses can't provide the quality of care, but when you start to overwork nurses, then it gets into a situation where, because they can't get to a patient in a timely manner, you're now crossing the bounds of safety. That is something we cannot tolerate here. We have to have sufficient nursing care to make sure that all our patients in the hospital are safe.

I think people underestimate the importance of nursing care and the important role that nursing care has played over the decades as we've developed a first-rate hospital care system in this province. Nurses are the front-line workers. They are the ones who give the constant attention. They are the ones who understand on an hour-by-hour and minute-by-minute basis exactly what's happening to that patient, how that patient is reacting to treatment or to medication. They are the ones who know. They're right there on the front line, and if you start to cut that front-line worker out, as you people across the way in the Harris government have done, then you start to put people in jeopardy, and that shall not be accepted by anybody in this province.

It's ironic that Mike Harris said during the election campaign, on Bob Fisher's show on Global TV, Focus Ontario, that he had no plans to close hospitals, yet we find ourselves in this position today.

Some 86% of nurses who have been surveyed said they believe the provincial government doesn't have a good understanding of health care issues. I think that's correct when we see the hospital restructuring commission going around to communities across the province. They seemed to use the north as their first testing ground, going up to Thunder Bay and then to Sudbury for their first announcement of closures. They announced these closures, which they call a rationalization of the hospital care system, without instituting, because they don't have the mandate, the community care services that should be there to at least replace those hospital services they're closing down. They haven't done that. They don't have the authority to do that. All they can do is make some recommendations, yet we haven't seen too many of those reinvestments being made.

Many of our communities are feeling abandoned by the Harris government. They don't see the health care facilities on the ground to replace these hospital services that are being closed and shut down. There's a lot of fear out there.

I think the government should re-examine exactly how they are rationalizing this health care system. We're not against the rationalization of the health care system, but it's the way you approach it. You're putting the cart before the horse: You're closing down the hospital care services without instituting community care services. You've got to spend a little money first and make sure those community care services are there. Then you can start to ratchet down some of the hospital care services.

You're right, we don't need all the hospital beds we used to rely upon because of the tremendous advances in medical care today. Many of the new techniques and advances mean that much of the surgery, for instance, can be done on a day care basis: day surgery and you're in and out. The anaesthetics are better, the techniques are better, the procedures are better, doctors and nurses are more highly trained. So we do have potentially a much more efficient service as long as the community-based service is there. It's very important that these services be there, but it's very important that the government tackle it in the right order and make sure the community-based replacement services are there before they cut the hospitals.

Some 76% of nurses also believe they do not have a say in the types of health care decisions being made. I think this is very, very important. What we have is a hospital restructuring commission that goes around but doesn't really talk to the people in the community. It doesn't talk to the health care providers involved with these services. Who better than nurses, for instance, to give especially the government advice as to how the health care system should be rationalized?

The nurses themselves have gone through this procedure. Over the last couple of years they have taken a very critical look at the health care system. They have brought forward some very innovative proposals that are cost-effective and should save the government a lot of money, yet I don't see the government, through the Ministry of Health and the Minister of Health, Mr Wilson, taking a look at the advice that nurses have brought to the people of Ontario. They've done some extensive studies, working with all other health care professionals.

Most doctors endorse what the nurses have proposed in rationalizing the health care delivery system, but I don't see the hospital restructuring commission looking at those ideas. They basically come into town, talk to a few people, and a month later they make a decision. It's frightening to people across the province when that sort of group comes into town and says a month later, "We're closing your hospital." You have a 30-day appeal period, maybe, but so far we really haven't seen too much result from those appeals. Those decisions seem to be final and they are causing a lot of fear and aggravation in the communities involved.

I would say to the government that maybe it's time to take a pause, to take a breath and stop for a minute. Let's just take a look at what you've done so far. Is it effective? Are you doing what you think you're doing to the health care system? Let's take a look at it. Maybe it's time just to stop this and take account of the changes that have been happening so rapidly, because we're hurting



people, we're hurting communities, and I think with great haste we're closing down institutions that have served our communities very, very well. So I think it's time to pause and take stock of all these changes that are coming forward.

It's important to note the importance of health care practitioners, but if we don't have sufficient health care practitioners, we're not going to be solving the problems we face in Ontario.

Another example of where health care practitioners can be of very big assistance is on many of the aboriginal first nation reserves we have in northern Ontario. It is very difficult and sometimes not practical to have a family physician permanently stationed on one of the northern reserves, especially those reserves north of the 60th parallel in Ontario where many of our isolated reserves are. But it is very practical to have a nurse practitioner stationed at those reserves. That nurse practitioner not only can handle many of the cases involved on a day-to-day basis but also has the education and knowledge to be able to know when to very quickly evacuate a patient to one of the more southern health care centres or hospitals, such as Kenora and Dryden etc, which would be the referral centres for those northern reserves, where there are doctors and even specialists in those towns. This is another excellent use of a nurse practitioner. Where we have been unsuccessful in getting doctors to go to those areas, a nurse practitioner is the right and proper person to provide that service.

I say to the government today that it's important that you expedite the nurse practitioner training programs for this whole province. You'll find that it will greatly alleviate our underserved area problem in northern Ontario and I think in a lot of places in rural Ontario too where we have this problem. It is surprising that up to a few years ago the underserved areas of this province for doctors have primarily been in the north, but now we're finding that many of the highly populated areas of rural southern Ontario, even a city such as Windsor, have now been decreed as underserved areas. It's unbelievable that a city like Windsor now finds itself underserved.

That's the position we find ourselves in today. We desperately need nurse practitioners. I think it's timely that the government got on to providing the funding for our universities so that many of these 15,000 laid-off nurses can find their new opportunities. The government, through underfunding these courses, is not providing these nurses, whom they put out of business, with opportunities to get on with some of these new careers. Also, by delaying the institution of these community-based services, where nurses are going to play a very large role, we're basically building a roadblock for nurses going into the new service provision areas that they're going to be highly qualified for and that are going to be greatly needed as hospitals shut down.

I hope the health minister will come into this House next week —

**Mr Pouliot:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: My apologies. Our friend displays great oratory skills. Unfortunately, the government has chosen not to have people to hear him. A quorum call, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** A quorum call.

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker. *The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

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**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** Another very important area that nurse practitioners can bring to medical care is the area of health promotion. Up till the last few years health care in this country — I'm sure my colleague from Wilson Heights will be very interested in this because of a very related private member's bill he brought forward a few weeks back — has really been the treatment of disease and not the promotion of wellness.

It's part of the training, I suppose, and the culture of our medical practitioners in this country that this is the way we've treated health care, that basically when you're sick, you come to a doctor, you get fixed up and hopefully you don't get sick again. I think we understand now that enhancement of individual wellness is the way to live out a healthy and productive life.

One of the practitioners who can help with this, besides family physicians, who I think are starting to work more towards this, is the nurse practitioner. When we're talking about the most appropriate health care professional providing the most appropriate health care, the nurse practitioner probably will be the most cost-effective health care provider for health promotion and disease prevention.

That's the sort of work a lot of people need. We need a lot of more education on our lifestyle habits, our dietary skills, making sure we get enough exercise and enough sleep. That all contributes to wellness. Our system could certainly afford the time of a nurse practitioner in sitting down with patients and spending the time with patients, while our doctors so much of the time are overworked and unable to do this, to work on a regime for wellness, rather than always just coming to the health care provider when we're ill.

This is a whole new area we need to be exploring. Not only would we be providing much better health care to the people of Ontario, allowing Ontarians to have longer, healthier and more productive lives, but also the government would find, whatever government of the day, that it would be a more cost-effective way of managing the system, that if we'd not concentrate on disease treatment as much, but really start to work on health promotion, we'd have a healthier population and a healthier bottom line at the Ministry of Health because we'd find it would be a much more cost-effective way of delivering health care services.

This is another area we need to really move into. By starting to enhance the importance and the numbers of our nurse practitioners, we really could develop a world-class system of health care and start to make some improvements that would be a very different note to health care than what we've been seeing from this government from all the dismantling of our hospitals.

I would like to say, in closing, that we should be encouraging this government to put the funding into the



nurse practitioner programs so that we can open up many more positions for those nurses who are now out of work because of the government cuts, so they can get into these courses, can get themselves upgraded, can get themselves into areas that are underserved, and start providing the people of Ontario with a whole level of health care that would be better for the people of Ontario, cost-effective for the government and really start to change how we look at the treatment of disease and the enhancement of wellness in the province.

**Mr Bradley:** I thank you for an opportunity to speak on a bill I actually agree with. What you usually find is that when there's a bill where there's agreement, it moves through the Legislature rather quickly. Members will note that a minister rose this evening to indicate there had been an agreement, or at least to ask unanimous consent for an agreement, for both second and third reading of the nurse practitioners bill to be completed this evening, and there was agreement in this House.

One of the things I would note is that if the government is insistent upon ramming its new rule changes through this House, you won't see that kind of cooperation that makes this place work. You won't see that kind of cooperation from the opposition, just as earlier today you saw cooperation. There was an opportunity to have an hour of voting take place because a five-minute bell would be required for each of the concurrences. Instead, the opposition gave consent to have the same vote on each occasion.

Some of the mad dogs, whatever that means, don't realize this. They have the frown on their face and they're disgusted with the opposition and so on. They don't recognize that there are many places where the opposition has to grant consent to the government, and on most occasions that happens, but when you have a loaded gun placed to the side of your head, figuratively speaking naturally, called drastic rules changes, then it's more difficult to have the kind of debates that we have this evening where we have full agreement, consensus from the three parties on the fact that we shall have a nurse practitioners act, that we shall see an expansion of that, because there are already some nurse practitioners in Ontario, as a result of a long process.

I can recall that my colleague Elinor Caplan was very much in favour of this, and subsequent ministers including the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who is here tonight, and the former member for Lakeshore, Ruth Grier, were very much in favour of this legislation. Everyone has been working on it and finally we have it produced in the form of a bill which, the two opposition House leaders indicated to the House leader of the government, would pass rather expeditiously.

It reminded me of the whole list we went through when we were discussing this. This was one of the bills on the list and the government House leader came in and said to us, "What do you think we'll be able to accomplish in the last couple of weeks?" I indicated, and the House leader of the NDP, that the overwhelming majority of the bills that were still on the list could be accomplished within the last two weeks. As we kept giving more and more to the government House leader, in total shock he didn't know what to say because he had been

given his orders to impose rule changes, despite the fact that the opposition had indicated a desire to cooperate in the passing of some bills, even some bills with which we have some disagreement.

It was very conciliatory, very reasonable, but you had the feeling just from talking to the government House leader that the orders had come down from on high, that is, the Premier's office, that he must impose drastic rule changes which would severely restrict the opposition's opportunity to debate in this House, and would grease the skids for the government to be able to ram through its radical revolutionary changes in very short order rather than through a process where proper analysis and adequate debate could improve the legislation, and perhaps in some instances convince the government to withdraw that legislation.

There have been discussions since then with the House leaders since we want to at least hear what the government has to say. My suspicion is they want to simply tinker with the original motion and come back with one that they'll try to characterize represents some compromises. It reminds me of when given the choice whether you'd rather have arsenic or hemlock as the drink of the day, provided by the government of Ontario under the leadership of Mike Harris. My guess would be that the opposition would like neither arsenic nor hemlock, although there may be some on the government side who would not recoil at the thought of the opposition consuming at least a little of both, if it would shorten the debate.  
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Here we are dealing with a bill where, again, there's cooperation, where you're going to see something that is not called for in the rules, that is, consideration of two stages of a bill in one sitting. But because we are in agreement with this, because there is consensus, because it's unlikely that there's a need for any hearings, since extensive consultations have taken place, therefore, the bill will proceed.

Where there are bills that come before us which are more contentious, which have more opposition, which have greater ramifications for the province, then you will see the opposition request more time to deal with those. That's how the House should work; that's what's happening with this particular bill. With the new rules being imposed by the government, that kind of flexibility is eliminated, those kinds of accords will be come rare rather than the norm, as they are at the present time.

This bill is along with some old red tape bills that need third reading, where the opposition has said, "Yes, it looks like some of these which are relatively benign could proceed." The Development Charges Act is one which I don't find particularly good, but it is essential to the fund-raising efforts of the Conservative Party, and who am I to block the efforts of the Conservative Party to fill those coffers to overflowing with the donations from major developers in this province? I'm not prepared to stand in your way to do that, so I said we would probably complete third reading of that.

We have third reading required on the Community Safety Act. That's going to pass, I'm sure, before the end of this session.



The Provincial Offences Act is in its final stages. Not too much opposition to that. Some people are concerned; certainly some police officers, as you know, are concerned that a quota system isn't set up, that they aren't out there with radar guns instead of looking for crooks, pointing radar guns at people going just a little over the speed limit. Some of those officers are afraid there will be quotas. That's what they're afraid of. They've written to us and said, "We are afraid of quotas," and I agree with those police officers who are afraid under the Provincial Offences Act there will be quotas.

Public libraries, where we get information on a bill like this — if you want to know about nurse practitioners, go to the public library. The funding and the resources for the public library are going to be reduced by a bill that you're going to want to pass, but I still see that as part of this package that we're dealing with tonight.

We could probably deal with a couple of the second set of red tape bills at second reading. The nurse practitioners, here we are at second and third reading. This is part of the package. We said, "Sure, go ahead with that." Road safety is having some hearings right now, so people who have concerns can give their views in committee. We said, "Sure, that's going to finish." We've been calling for it since February of this year.

The Game and Fish Act: I said to the Minister of Natural Resources the other night, the Game and Fish Act is like the nurse practitioners act. We are prepared to proceed with that. It's not contentious. There are some good things in it. We want to do some debate, but there are some good things in it.

The finance bill, the Waterloo bill we've already passed, Bill 135, concurrences in supply, House calendar, more budget debate — any one of those, we've said: "Let's proceed with it. Let's do what we're doing with this bill."

Orders had come down, unfortunately, and there were six bullets, or whatever you put in a chamber, and it was placed right up against the head of the opposition, and we were told — I speak figuratively, naturally — "Either you accept this package or you better throw everything through rather quickly." When we said, "We'll give you everything," then it was like an armed robbery, and somebody came up and said, "I want all your credit cards and all your money," so you give them the credit cards and the money and say, "Is that enough? Here, go ahead, take it," and they say, "No, we'd like your children's photographs and the wallet itself." We began to see that these discussions were a bit of a ruse and the government was intent upon ramming through all its legislation, when in fact it doesn't have to ram through the nurse practitioners act, which I want to deal with this evening.

The nurse practitioners act has been coming for some period of time. We are in agreement with it. My friend the member for Timiskaming has outlined many of the potential uses which will come about as a result of nurse practitioners being available in greater numbers in this province. There are many tasks they could perform, many diagnoses, many medical procedures that do not necessarily require a medical doctor but rather could be performed by a nurse practitioner. It makes all kinds of

sense. This is common sense at its best, to have nurse practitioners in this province.

We get to the problem of, where are you going to find them? There are 15,000 nurses losing their jobs in the province. Some of those people are going to be available, because they've been fired out the door at various hospitals. I know we're all afraid. In the Niagara Peninsula, the Port Colborne hospital — those people have been here, they've had their big rallies. They're afraid this government is going to close the hospital in Port Colborne, and I am deeply concerned about that.

Then I think of Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie, where we have nurses who are going to have to be laid off or turfed out the door if that is radically changed or closed. Then in Grimsby, the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital — again, the axe is hovering over the top of that hospital. The lovely hospital that we have down in Niagara-on-the-Lake is threatened with a closure, and in St Catharines the Hotel Dieu Hospital is under the gun. There are many who believe it's going to close, some who believe enough to make a recommendation that it close. I am adamantly opposed to the closing of any of those hospitals.

If you look at the demographics of the Niagara region, this is why we'll need nurse practitioners, this is why we'll need nurses, this is why we'll need our hospitals: The Niagara region has, per capita, more people over the age of 55 than any other area of similar size in the country.

That is why Dr David Foot, the author of *Boom, Bust and Echo*, an economist, a statistician and, I guess the word is "demographer," from the University of Toronto, who has written an award-winning and best-selling book, when asked at a forum in St Catharines, a large number of people gathered at Brock University, "If you had any advice for the Mike Harris government, what would that advice be?" said: "I looked at the demographic picture of the Niagara region. My advice would be, 'Don't close hospitals.'" What are we doing? What is the provincial government doing? Trying to close five hospitals in the Niagara region.

It simply shouldn't happen, and I hope this government will review that, because we have many nurses in the Niagara region who have been providing that service over the years in those hospitals and who are going to lose their jobs. I am very concerned about this. I don't want any of the other hospitals under the gun either. A person who says, "Keep ours open and close Welland or close one of the other hospitals" — we will need all the hospitals in the Niagara region.

Anybody who has been in a hospital lately, either to visit friends or relatives or they themselves have been in a hospital as a patient, knows that the service available in 1997 is far less than what was available even 10 years ago, because there are fewer members of staff available to provide that service, including nurses. It is said now that if you are going into a hospital and you know ahead of time, you better make sure you have a relative or a good friend to look after you, or, if you're lucky enough, a nurse practitioner who might be available to help out, because the number of nurses has been drastically reduced.



I am amused — I guess that's the wrong word — in an odd way when I hear hospital administrators say, "We're going to reduce staff by 200 and we're going to provide better service." That can only be classified as nonsense, but the reason they have to say that is that hospital funding is drastically cut, \$1.3 billion cut out of hospital funding in this province. That means layoffs. That means fewer people to clean the hospital. That means fewer people involved in food preparation, fewer orderlies, fewer nurses, fewer people who are involved in the operation of a hospital, and everybody recognizes this. 1950

When I hear people talking about the tax cut, they say: "Listen, if I could have a choice between this tax cut you're going to give me, I would prefer good hospital care instead of the tax cut. Maybe after, when you've balanced the budget and there are more revenues flowing in, okay, think about it then, but give me good hospital care."

This government probably does a lot of polling. Some day I'd like to ask an order paper question, but it would have to be one of four under the new rules. I would ask them about their polling lately, because they're always spending lots of money on polling. They're probably asking people about health care and people are going to tell them: "We're prepared to invest the dollars. We're prepared to have our tax dollars go quality health care in this province."

Part of the component of that, if I might speak directly to this bill, of course is for nurse practitioners. The nurse practitioners and the nurses look out there and they say, "My gosh, I remember a big fight the government was in with the doctors and it sounded like a major clash." There was a lot of angst and anguish among members of the medical profession and of course eventually there was an agreement reached.

Those of us in the opposition were quite astounded at the price of that agreement, but we said: "If you're going to adequately compensate physicians in this province, that's fine; do so. But please don't close my hospital, please don't reduce my service, please don't fire nurses so that you can pay more money to the doctors. If you're going to pay more money to the doctors — and they work very hard and deserve adequate compensation — then please forget about the tax cut and pay the doctors adequately and don't close my hospital so that I can pay physicians more money."

Everybody recognizes that physicians, as many others in the greater public sector, have had their compensation restrained considerably in the last few years and were looking for additional compensation. I don't think they said, "Would you close hospitals to give it to us?" I don't think they said, "Would you fire nurses to give it to us?" I think they said, "Why don't you simply forget about the tax cut?" as one doctor said in Niagara Falls appearing before Bill 26. He said the tax cut was crazy when I asked him the question about how they're going to give a tax cut.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** He hasn't given it back.

**Mr Bradley:** The Minister of Community and Social Services interjects, "He hasn't given it back." Of course,

because he sees others in the province receiving theirs. I don't expect that that automatically is going to go back. But given the choice, he, like so many others, would like to see it back in the system. If everyone were involved it putting it back in the system, then he, like others, would be in favour of that.

But these are the people who are saying that. Frankly, I thought when I asked the question I wasn't going to get the answer I was looking for, and I didn't load the question. It was a fairly balanced question compared to the questions I could have asked. It was a balanced question, and this is where the doctor said words to the effect that the tax cut was crazy, and I agreed with him. I didn't know what to expect. Because of the level of compensation he gets, he may benefit more than others from the tax cut, but he said, "I think we should put it into health care," and I agree with him.

I hope there's nobody in the government here who believes they can silence the doctors in their opposition to closing hospitals simply by putting money in their pockets and saying, "Here's some hush money." You can't do that. You can't do that because the doctors in this province can't be shut up that way. They can't be. They are prepared to defend the hospitals in this province and the services in this province. They can't be bought off. Any of your efforts to try to silence them by giving them more money won't work, I can tell you that, because they're dedicated individuals and they will continue to defend the health care system, which includes nurse practitioners. The Speaker is concerned that I direct some of my comments at least to the bill.

The nurse practitioners will be concerned about mental health services in our province, because we have a great problem there. Many of the people we have walking the streets of large communities such as Metropolitan Toronto are either psychiatric patients who are out of institutional settings or ex-psychiatric patients. These are pretty sad cases to observe, but they are victims of the underfunding of the health care system, of adequate services available for mental health patients in this province. I know the nurse practitioners affected by this bill would agree with me when I say that we have to ensure that those services are in place.

I know that nurse practitioners would want medical research funds to be adequate so that we could deal with the various diseases and afflictions that are out there, so that people from all strata of the economic society in which we live would have available to them the same level of service and you don't have a two-tier system. I know nurse practitioners would not want to see the kind of two-tier system advocated by Preston Manning when he was trotting around the country talking about giving those provinces the right to run medicare the way they wanted to.

I know our government would never think of establishing a two-tier system, never think of that. Although I have heard rumours to the effect that the government would look favourably upon this, I can't believe that the Conservative Party in Ontario would want to set up a system where if you've got money, you can go to the front of the line, and if you don't, you're relegated to the line with everybody else.

*Interjection.*



**Mr Bradley:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing makes a very valid case. He says, you know, with the underfunding that our government is involved in in health care in this province, we have lineups, and so people who have money go to the United States or elsewhere. He's quite right. He makes my case for increasing the funding for hospital care and for ensuring we have enough nurse practitioners and other members of the medical profession to serve the people of this province.

There shouldn't be a circumstance where if you're wealthy enough, you trot off to the United States to get the best service, and if you don't have the money, it's too bad; you wait in line. All of us here, including nurse practitioners, would know that there is a long lineup for people, for instance, who need hip replacements and other joint replacements. These are very often elderly individuals who have to wait a long time for this particular service. People will say: "Well, that's elective surgery. It can wait." To people who are suffering the pain and disability associated with a deteriorated joint of some kind, those people will need to have those operations sooner, but they can't have them if they're going to have a tax cut in Ontario and not have enough money to put into the health care system.

I know that many seniors in this province will welcome the opportunity to have nurse practitioners available because seniors need more health care than others. As we all advance in age, the chances that we will need the services of nurse practitioners, nurses in hospitals, acute care hospitals, chronic care hospitals, will increase considerably. The probability increases as we all get older. Surely those people who have dedicated so much of their lives to others, who have paid the price in years gone by, who have been the pillars of our society, the senior citizens of this province, deserve good health care. I think they would prefer that to a tax cut which benefits the richest people to the greatest extent.

I've met seniors and others who cannot get a new family doctor. They say there are simply not enough doctors around: "I have to go to a walk-in clinic to get the service." Perhaps with nurse practitioners there will be more available to us. I certainly hope that is the case.

I'm worried, as I know everybody else is worried, that some of the silence we hear on these issues related to medical care is as a result of intimidation. People are afraid. District health councils, if they peep, will be getting some kind of rap on the knuckles, or they will be the hospital to close, or they will be the hospital to get a cut.

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I was travelling through southwestern Ontario and I went to Listowel and looked at the hospital there. There is a fine institution, and I hear it's in jeopardy of closing. I can't believe the government would even contemplate that, and I know my friend the member for Perth would agree with me that that hospital should stay open and continue to provide service to the people of that community. I know he would agree with me. Perhaps there will be some nurse practitioners who will be working in that particular hospital.

In terms of the coverage of this, you say, "What kind of coverage is going to take place of the need for medical services?" It used to be you had a lot of newspapers out

there that talked about this and said: "Let's do some special features on health care. Let's be advocates for quality health care." But now Conrad Black, through Hollinger, the company he owns, and Southam, a company he has now purchased, controls, what, 58 out of 104 newspapers in this province or this country. Will Conrad Black be in favour of nurse practitioners? I don't know that, but I know he is a right-winger, an ultra-Conservative who believes there should be a cut in government expenditures, that the public sector is somehow evil. That now starts to permeate into the editorials of those newspapers.

I remember when they used to write progressive, enlightened pieces that were pro-medical care. Now I see a change, even though Mr Radler in Chicago, who is the henchperson of Conrad Black, or the person who speaks for Conrad Black at minimum, says, "We don't interfere in the daily operations of the newspaper." Privately speak to reporters, privately speak to other people in the newspapers now controlled by Conrad Black, and they will tell you it's a far different operation today than it was before Conrad Black took over.

I well remember when Conrad Black was buddy-buddy with Brian Mulroney, a name that the other side doesn't like to hear.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Brian who?

**Mr Bradley:** They say, "Brian who?" You have a couple of members here — the Minister of Health was a Mulroney staffer. He worked for Perrin Beatty. John Baird, the person who was handed the notes from the Premier's office about rule changes and told, "Try to sneak these in on election day when nobody will know" — help me out. Wasn't he —

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** This afternoon you said John was sending notes to Ernie.

**Mr Bradley:** He was getting those from Guy Giorno and Tom Long and others. Where was I in this now? I'm trying to tie this down.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** You were talking about nurse practitioners and things, I think.

**Mr Bradley:** You are distracting me in how this happens. Oh yes, Mulroney. I think John Baird worked for Mulroney. He was a Mulroney staffer. I don't know how many people over there were Mulroney staffers, but I know they try to dissociate themselves. But I'm worried about the Speaker. I don't think she wants to have me engage in something outside the bill.

I'm wondering how we're going to get as many people within the medical profession when this government is increasing the tuition for people going into our colleges and universities. I think it's gone up about 30% since this government came in. There are members of the right wing, the Reform wing of this party, who get up and extol the virtues of the University of Western Ontario and Queen's when they come up with these huge tuition fees. They say, "They're going to get that money back later on," but what they don't say is only the kids of the rich people and the privileged people are going to be able to get into those institutions. So that chain of wealth will be perpetuated through the tuition system that is there. In their heart of hearts, I know members of the government agree with me on that.



All these young people are looking for jobs. Some of them might be able to be nurse practitioners, but not everybody will. It's a very sad day out there for those young people who can't receive jobs.

The nurse practitioners, among others, are concerned about the lack of junior kindergarten in the province, because they have to deal with patients. Remember that. They have to deal with these patients as they get older, and they're saying to me: "If only you had junior kindergarten early intervention, as advocated by Dr Fraser Mustard, former dean of medicine at McMaster University, former president. If only there were adequate funding so that school boards would be able to afford junior kindergarten without cutting other essential services, then we'd be better off." That's what the nurse practitioners say to me, and who am I to question them?

**Mrs Marland:** You finally mentioned them.

**Mr Bradley:** I did mention them, because I think they will play an important role.

I can say — I almost said, "in conclusion" — that nurses and nurse practitioners out there are writing to me about the rule changes. They say, "You know, those Reform Tories want to drive their Cadillac by without getting it scratched." The opposition says, "If the Cadillac is going by, maybe we'll get some nails out and scratch it so it doesn't go unscathed," and they don't like that.

The nurse practitioners know that if there's future legislation affecting medical services in this province, nurse practitioners may not have available to them the kind of debate that's available under the present rules, because this government wants two for one. They want to have two sessional days in one so they can rush through that revolutionary program quickly.

I'm sure my friend for Mississauga South would be more cautious than many of the revolutionaries. I remember her only too well in opposition and on council in Mississauga. She was a person of caution. She said, "Let's take our time and do things right instead of rushing them and doing them quickly." Even the people out there who agree with what these people are doing, with what the government's doing — and I agree with this measure, I agree with truck safety, I agree with the community safety program and I agree with victims' rights, but there are a lot of other things out there people are concerned about.

The nurse practitioners and others are saying to me: "Would you please slow them down? They're moving too quickly, too recklessly, too drastically and not looking at the consequences of their actions. Help them out. Help them slow down and do it right, instead of simply doing it quickly." But I want to see the nurse practitioners bill through tonight. I have indicated that from the beginning, back in those very conciliatory meetings with my friend the government House leader.

I think members of this House, and some who are unable to be here this evening because they have other commitments would be concerned about those rule changes and how they might affect a future nurse practitioners bill. Toni Skarica, the MPP for Wentworth North, said: "There's something wrong when the Premier and a couple of unelected staff people can run the entire province. It's a dictatorship." You're going to ask me,

this Toni Skarica, who says it's a dictatorship and there's something wrong when the Premier and a couple of unelected staff people can run the entire province, is he a Liberal? Is he a New Democrat? Is he an opposition person? No. He is a Conservative, an elected member of the government.

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**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** A reasonable guy.

**Mr Bradley:** I've always found him reasonable.

We all know Gary Carr, a very moderate individual. Gary says this: "Mike Harris has got to realize this is still a democracy, not a dictatorship." I think he must have seen the rule changes before they brought them in. He must have seen them circulated around, and this is his comment, "Mike Harris has got to realize this is still a democracy, not a dictatorship."

Bill Murdoch had something more earthy to say that I'm not going to repeat in the House, but he did say you have to be "nicey-nicey" and, let's say, show affection if you want to get ahead. I'm just paraphrasing when I said "show affection" because it's something that we don't normally say in the House.

I don't intend to use the full time allotted, because my good friend the member for London Centre is waiting to speak, as is perhaps the member for Fort York, and I am waiting to hear what they have to say on this piece of legislation and others.

You've got a winner here. You've got a piece of legislation that we all agree with. If you brought in more legislation of this kind, you would see this place move even faster.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Do you think we're moving too fast? Maybe we better slow it down.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Durham West is listening. I give her credit for that. She says, "You're accusing us of moving too fast, now you want us to move quickly." On areas where there's a consensus, by all means.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** So it's only when you agree with us.

**Mr Bradley:** No, no; when there's a consensus in the province. In an area where there's been a lot of work done over a lot of years, as my friend from York-Mackenzie would know there has been on this bill, then that's when you can proceed with some dispatch, but not when it's controversial, confrontational, radical, revolutionary legislation coming in. That is a time when that should not happen.

*Applause.*

**Mr Bradley:** The applause tells me that it may be time to share with others the opportunity to speak this evening. Much as I know some of the government members, my friend from Lambton and my friend from Sarnia — I have a sign on my desk that I can't reach right now, but both of those gentlemen have again faced tampering with their hospitals locally. I think if my memory is correct, the member for York-Mackenzie has had a big cut in funding for the York hospital. I heard that today, that there's been a cut in the funding for York hospital. It's not an increase, it's a cut, so I know he would be concerned, as he was when he ran in Essex for the Conservative Party in a little different milieu. He would have been concerned in those days.



I can count on my friend from Niagara Falls to stand shoulder to shoulder with me — he's in the House tonight — as we defend all of the hospitals in the Niagara region. He won't simply say, "Well, Greater Niagara hospital is looked after; that's all I'm concerned about." He is going to join the fight for all these hospitals — and my good friend from Mississauga South is on her feet. I thought she was going to interrupt to congratulate the Speaker or something.

**Mrs Marland:** No, I was going to do a Q and A.

**Mr Bradley:** In conclusion, I want to say that I am delighted that you have lifted this idea from the Liberal Party and are implementing it. When you do that, I'll tell you, you can't go wrong. I believe that's what you're doing, but I am prepared to compliment you on doing so. Here's at least one positive move made by this government, among a few others —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** No, I said "among a few others," because I'm not a person who's negative towards everything the government does. I try to be fair to all of you, but this is one positive move among many others. If I get an opportunity to speak on the other bill this evening, I'll canvass some other issues. Thank you for your kind attention and I will now resume my seat.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Marland:** I will be very brief because we have a lot of important debate still to go forward with this evening, but I do think it's important to correct my friend the member for St Catharines about my position and whether or not I agree with certain policies or all policies of our government as we move forward down the road of success that we started two years ago on June 8. I wouldn't want you to misunderstand anything that I may have said and I certainly would not have wanted to have misled you in any way. I fully support in every way the direction of our government.

**Mr Bradley:** Everything?

**Mrs Marland:** I'm very proud and grateful that they have been able, as has been shown in this bill that's before us at this moment, to draft legislation in the interests —

**Ms Lankin:** They didn't.

**Mrs Marland:** To bring forward legislation then, I say to the member for Beaches-Woodbine, that all parties support very enthusiastically, and isn't that just great? I think it really speaks volumes about constructive work that can be done in this place and really wish that perhaps we could do that more often. I feel that the member for St Catharines must understand that my position is unswerving in terms of the support of my government, of which I am very proud, under our Premier Mike Harris.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** It's always a joy to listen to my House leader, because he makes so much sense about the bigger issues in life.

The biggest issue of course that we're facing relates to this whole notion of a tax cut. I can't for the life of me understand how a government that likes to pride itself on being a businesslike government, that likes to run the province as a business, can possibly justify the giving of a tax cut when we are still running a deficit on a yearly basis.

During its term of office, the public debt in this province is going to increase from \$100 billion, where it was at when they took over — of which \$40 billion, by the way, was incurred by the Davis government and the ones before that, \$10 billion by the previous Liberal government and \$50 billion by the New Democratic government. But how can they possibly justify giving people a tax cut when as a result of that tax cut the public debt of this province is going to rise by \$20 billion, to \$120 billion?

We also know that in the government's own budget documents the interest on the public debt is going to go up from \$7.3 billion, where it was two years ago, to \$9.1 billion this year, almost a \$2-billion increase in interest payments. This is at a time when we have unprecedented low interest rates. Can you imagine what the interest payment would be if the interest rate were still at a 10% or an 11% level, where it has been for most of the time over the last 15 or 20 years?

I say to the government, do the right thing. You could still make up to the people of Ontario and all the harm that you're doing to so many people in this province by renouncing your tax cut and paying down the debt of this province further.

**Mr Hudak:** It's a pleasure to stand and make some comments on what I've heard from across the floor today. It's a significant change that we're seeing when we see the Liberals opposite talking about the importance of balancing the budget and eliminating the deficit, which is just a wholesale change from what we saw when they were in government not too long ago. I think it's a credit to the role of the government in bringing that issue to the forefront to see that they are agreeing with us that we should work towards balancing the budget and continuing that progress.

To correct the member's approach a bit on the issue, in fact we have put more money into health care. We have cut taxes. Yes, we have more revenue coming into the coffers and that revenue is being used to put into health care.

The member for Timiskaming talked about the importance of the nurse practitioner program, and we agree, we couldn't agree more, and that's why we're bringing this legislation forward. In fact, we have put, I think, \$7.3 million for the past few years towards 1998-99 for nurse practitioners, which is going to result in the graduation of 402 nurse practitioners who will have their bachelor degrees by 1999 to help out in the small communities across Ontario to deliver a higher quality care.

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That's been borne out by research in the United States and in Canada that shows the outcomes of nurse practitioners are equal if not better than dealing with family doctors in a lot of areas, because of the teaching that they give to the patient, the ability for a patient then working with a nurse practitioner to understand his or her ailment and how to treat that. We've seen great outcomes, and that's why we're proceeding with this legislation, to call the debate back to the bill at hand.

Furthermore, some other investments in nursing, for the record: We have about \$200,000 for a research team at McMaster to get the best nursing practices across



Ontario and, among many others, \$170 million into long-term care for over 4,000 jobs in community care.

**Mr Kwinter:** We have a bill we obviously are going to support, but the problem we have is that the government gives and the government takes, and unfortunately it's taking far more than it's giving. I listen to members of the government side and they keep telling about how they are maintaining the amount of money that's going into the health care system and in fact they are even possibly increasing it a little bit. What they don't recognize and what they don't bother to say is that just by keeping the numbers the same they are falling behind.

The population is increasing, the population is aging. The amount of money required to provide the same level of service is greater, so by maintaining the same level we have a situation where we are effectively cutting health care. The reality of the situation is that you can argue today, tomorrow and next year that you're maintaining the level of health care, but I can tell those of you who live in jurisdictions where your hospitals are going to close, when you talk to your constituents and tell them, "Yesterday you had a hospital, tomorrow you're not going to have a hospital," that to them is a cut in health care. You cannot rationalize it away. You cannot say to them, "This is good for you for you because this hospital is shutting down so we can provide you with a better system."

I can tell you that it doesn't sell; it doesn't make any sense. We acknowledge that there's a surplus of beds but there is not a surplus of hospitals. The hospital is a facility that services the community, and if it's gone, it is a huge deficit in the health care treatment of those people.

**The Acting Speaker:** Summary, the member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I'd like to thank all the members who responded to my remarks and those of the member for Timiskaming. I would share further with them the comments of Mary Ellen Jeans, the Canadian Nurses Association president.

"Stress, burnout and 'total exhaustion' are becoming a fact of life for nurses, particularly in Ontario, where the provincial government has slashed health care spending, said Jeans, in Vancouver for the 21st quadrennial congress of the International Council of Nurses, the world's largest gathering of nurses.

"I meet regularly with nurses in the Ottawa area who say they can hardly stand after a 12-hour shift. They're continually run ragged," she said. "But once they get home, they get on the phone to make sure their patients are okay because they're concerned about them"....

"Jeans said the pressure on the...health system 'means nurses, because they are in the front line of health care, are often real victims. The public takes them for granted, but they are continually being brought under more and more pressure.'

"Jeans said patient safety is also being compromised by the trend toward using unqualified hospital staff to carry out nursing duties, as well as a move towards the 'rapid' discharge of patients.

"We are seeing the continual downsizing of hospitals and the move towards getting the patients quickly out of the hospital."

I agree with her entirely. I thought maybe one of the other members would be quoting her because, as the member for York South says, they're discharging them "quicker and sicker." Grammatically correct I think you'd say "more quickly and more sickly," but they are doing so. You talk to people now, and they're bouncing them right out of the hospital. They could have infections, they could have complications, and there aren't the services in the community to look after those who are discharged from the hospital. I'm surprised none of my Conservative friends pointed that out and said that they were sorry for the drastic cut in hospital funding in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Madam Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to share my time with the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is that agreed? Agreed.

**Mrs Marland:** Of course, if you don't call any more quorums.

**Mrs Boyd:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and there's no deal on quorum, just so the member for Mississauga South knows.

This is a day that nurse practitioners and those who want to be nurse practitioners in the province have long looked forward to. I think it will be a day that all of us can be proud to have been part of accomplishing, because the position of nurse practitioner is key in terms of a restructured and integrated health care system. We are accomplishing something quite remarkable here and it is, as a number of members have said, something that has been worked on over quite a period of time.

There was a time when nurse practitioners were able to get their certification, back in the 1970s, and at that time a number of people who still are practising today did in fact get that certification. But for a number of reasons, those nurse practitioners were never allowed to practise with the scope of practice this bill will allow, and they were never funded for the kind of work they were able to do, given their training and given their certification. It is indeed good that tonight we are seeing the culmination of a long period of work that has resulted in this bill coming forward and, we all hope, being passed tonight.

I think a lot of us have had letters and copies of letters to members of the government from nurse practitioners, from physicians, from the various associations, urging us to go on with our work; to be sure that before we leave this place for our brief holiday in July this piece of legislation is passed and it is possible for us as we go forward with restructuring health care to know that nurse practitioners will have the scope of practice they require to be a vital link in our health care services.

I'd like to read to you from a letter that the acting Minister of Health, David Johnson, was sent on March 27. This is from Jan Berger, who is a registered nurse, who also is a bachelor of fine arts and who has a number of other qualifications. She says, in part:

"As a registered nurse, and practitioner involved in promoting health and wellbeing in the corporate and industrial workplace, I am writing to express concern about the delay in the introduction of legislation recognizing the expanded role of nurse practitioners, and the



extended class status of registered nurses. The latter is a request for individual assessment by the College of Nurses granting those who have worked in advance care environments the right to practise advanced skills without further education. I am one of the applicants for extended class status.

"Processing this legislation promptly could enable the nurses of our province to refocus their skills out into the community and industry. With the imminent hospital closures in the current mandate of the provincial government, providing ongoing education funding for the purpose of refocusing the skills of nurses may have substantial long-term benefits."

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Madam Chair: Would you ascertain whether or not there's a quorum?

**The Acting Speaker:** Could you check and see if there's a quorum.

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker. *The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre. 2030

**Mrs Boyd:** So you can see there is a pent-up desire among the nursing community to be able to have this bill passed and to be able to move forward.

I think it's important, since we have agreed that we are going to pass both second and third reading of this bill and this bill won't go out to committee, that someone talk about what actually is involved in this whole issue of being a nurse practitioner. Many of the people of Ontario have not encountered a nurse practitioner. They are not sure what the qualifications are for a nurse practitioner. Although some other members have talked about some of the tasks a nurse practitioner might do, there are many others that have not yet been mentioned.

We owe it to the nurses of the province to give real attention to what this is we're passing. When we go out to committee, very often part of the purpose of that is to educate the public about a change that is about to occur, and to inform them, to give them an opportunity to ask questions, to be clearer about the changes we're doing. Quite frankly, the discussion that we've had here tonight, with the exception of the member for Timiskaming, has not really furthered that educational goal to the extent we normally would do in this House.

The member for Niagara South who introduced the bill on behalf of the government, and who has two hospitals closing in his riding, seemed to be of the mistaken belief that what he was bringing forward was a red-tape bill. Now we know there are two lots of red-tape bills. This in fact is not a red-tape bill. So if anyone out there was mistaken and thought this was a red-tape bill, because somehow there was a long protocol that used to govern the practice of these nurses, that is not the point at all.

This is a bill that is expanding the scope of practice of nurses who have gone through very specialized training which enables them to participate in the health care system in a way all of us anticipate will be to our benefit.

I think it is really essential we make sure people know how complex it has been to ensure that the education is there for these folks, that they are able to access this in

an appropriate way, that the ability to upgrade these skills has been carefully thought out over many years.

My colleague from Beaches-Woodbine worked very hard when she was Minister of Health to set up the program, and the program is called the Ontario primary health care nurse practitioner education program. It is a remarkable program because it is made up of a consortium, and it is a model for a kind of post-secondary certification, a post-secondary education, that is really quite remarkable. It is offered by the Council of Ontario Universities programs in nursing and it includes Lakehead University, Laurentian University, McMaster University, University of Ottawa, Queen's University, Ryerson Polytechnic University, University of Toronto, University of Western Ontario, University of Windsor and York University.

This consortium has developed a program that enables nurses to take this education through a number of different means using all the most modern techniques we have so far developed. They can do it by e-mail. They can do it on CD-ROM. They can do computer-mediated learning, audio conferencing, video conferencing, print-based modules. It's a very exciting prospect because these nurses can upgrade where they are, and because so many of the universities are involved, the possibility of expanding the education of these nurses, I would say is well beyond the 420 that the member for Niagara South expected to be certified by 1999; our capacity is great.

It needs to be because, as other members have pointed out, we have about 15,000 nurses in this province who find themselves at least job-threatened if not laid off. We can't afford to lose their talents and their commitment to the work that they have. We need them in our reconfigured system of health to deliver the kinds of services that are going to transform health care from what it has been in this province, an illness system, gate-checked by physicians, into a system that allows us to participate with a nurse practitioner in our primary care. I think it's very important for us to recognize that this is a huge step.

There are a number of enrolment options that people can have, depending on what their circumstances are. First of all, this education can happen in both English and French, although French is only available at Ottawa and Laurentian universities. It can be done part-time or full-time. If the person has a baccalaureate degree, then the course is 12-month, full-time for the nurse practitioner certificate, and if they are a diplomaed nurse, it is a 12-month, full-time task, and at the end of that they get a bachelor of science of nursing and a nurse practitioner certificate.

It is part of the move that has been recommended by the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario for many years to move our education more and more into baccalaureate nursing, and those of you who have heard from the RNAO know the reason why they believe that level of education offers the best use of nursing skills in our community.

The admission criteria: Who can get into this? Can it be just anybody? Well, no, there are very clear admission criteria. First of all, they have to hold a current Ontario certificate of competence in nursing. They have to have



a minimum 70% average in their completed nursing program, whether it's diploma or degree. They need to meet the individual requirements, the admission requirements of individual universities, and they must have the equivalent of at least two years of full-time nursing experience within the last five years.

**Mr Pouliot:** Snobelen would never make it.

**Mrs Boyd:** A lot of people wouldn't make it unless they upgrade, and so we know that some of the nurses who want to get into this program also have to take additional education.

The role of the nurse practitioner, as it is defined in this, is as follows: Nurse practitioners hold advanced education in primary health care nursing; nurse practitioners emphasize health promotion and disease prevention, serving individuals, families and communities in collaboration with the client and a variety of health care professionals; the nursing practice of nurse practitioners addresses client health needs over the entire life span.

This is a bit of a change from what we're used to. We're talking about our primary health care nurse, our primary health care contact in the health system working with us as clients in communities, and working with us to plan for health as opposed to working with us only to deal with illness when it occurs.

It's a very important role and one that every single document on the change in our health care system has emphasized, that we need to move, that we need to do everything we can to lever the change of a health care system that puts more and more of its emphasis on the prevention of illness and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, healthy and safe communities, not simply perpetuating the treatment of illnesses when they occur, because some can be avoided, many can be avoided, if the kinds of advice around nutrition, lifestyle, hygiene, addictions, that can be given in that primary health care setting were actually done.

Where is the workplace? We heard from the member for Timiskaming about the use of nurse practitioners in the north and on reserves, and coming from Timiskaming, he knows how very important it would be to amplify what is available in those communities by having this kind of nurse practitioner available. He did a fine job of that.

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I don't think he really talked about some of the other areas that are also important. Occupational health is one that is very important. If you have a nurse practitioner onsite in a plant, able to do the kind of preventive work for the workers in that place, able to ensure that the environment is healthy, that people are following their safety requirements, that illnesses are dealt with quickly because people don't have to lose time in order to get these checked out, then that practitioner is very, very valuable in that setting.

In correctional services, nurse practitioners also can help to maintain the health of those who are in those facilities. It's extremely important for us to understand that those facilities are not always the healthiest places to be and that many who are in those prisons have a poor level of health when they enter in the first place.

Many people don't know how prevalent the problem of tuberculosis is becoming among the prison population. Two individuals in the Don Jail were diagnosed with active tuberculosis within the last month. In fact, I think they were diagnosed within one week. Those of us who know the scourge of tuberculosis once it takes hold and the resistance of tuberculosis to the kinds of antibiotics that were developed to deal with tuberculosis, because of the way our immune systems have adjusted to them, know that the threat of a tuberculosis epidemic is always with us.

Indeed, having that kind of primary care on the spot, that ability to deal very quickly, to order tests, to ensure that there is quick action is a very important protective part, not to mention dealing with all the other complaints and stresses that occur for people in that circumstance. Of course, when you have an onsite nurse in a facility like that, they are also there to maintain the health of the employees, and that is very important.

In long-term care, particularly in the assessment of people — what level of care do they need? — work is being done to try and make sure that as we move into community-based long-term care, we have teams of people who can deal with the level of care that's required in an appropriate way and that that can be monitored by someone who has good experience in the area.

Home health services are similar.

Community health centres are very important. Most nurse practitioners currently work in community health settings. While community health settings occur in rural and northern Ontario, as the member for Timiskaming talked about, probably the most impressive work that is done by nurse practitioners is in the urban setting where nurse practitioners are extremely important members of the teams that work with street people, in this city and in other cities. In fact they are probably the only health professional who has won the trust of many of these people, who have often been abused by the health care system in one way or another. They are on our streets, working with people whose health is extraordinarily precarious, who by the indicators of health are extremely vulnerable, because of poverty, because of malnutrition, often because of addictions or mental illness, sexual and physical abuse in their past, isolation and abandonment by others.

I had a very exciting discussion this morning with a group of women who call themselves street nurses who were talking about the work they do with the youth on the streets of Toronto, talking about their mandate, which is usually from whatever age the youth comes into their contact up to about age 24. They were saying that many of their clients now are the children of those children. So we are seeing a spread of very serious problems where people do not have access to health care, are living in the streets, have very few supports, and the only support they can rely on is the expertise of the nurse practitioner and the social workers who work in those agencies.

The epidemiological circumstances for that population are very serious. Infections are rampant. Nutrition problems are rampant. Medication issues are very serious. Addiction issues are very serious. It is a population that needs special attention, and this group of nurse practi-



tioners, because of their philosophy to work with their clients, with their community, without judgement and without the kinds of class biases that often affect those in professions, is particularly valuable.

Madam Speaker, I don't believe we have a quorum. Would you call for a quorum?

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

You can see that the kind of change we are facilitating through the passage of this bill could be quite enormous.

I think it is important to know what the training comprises. This is the kind of thing we would have heard if we had insisted on going out to committee, so that the public would know what kind of education this is that people have.

There are five major courses that must be passed by nurse practitioners. The first one is a course called Pathophysiology for Nurse Practitioners. It's a very interesting description that I think all of us would feel very, very comforted to know is part of the training of nurse practitioners. I'm quoting the document from the consortium of universities:

"A systems approach is used to examine concepts in pathophysiology as a basis for advanced nursing practice. Case studies will provide a comprehensive overview of the ideology, pathogenesis and clinical manifestations of disease in adults and children. Building upon knowledge of normal anatomy and physiology across the lifespan, the student will learn to demonstrate an understanding of pathophysiological principles such as clinical manifestations, alterations in physiological function in organs and systems, and the impact of stress on age-related acute, episodic and chronic conditions found in the primary health care practice.

"Utilizing the concepts of pathophysiology, the foundation of nursing management of clients during acute phases of illness, as well as during recovery and rehabilitation, will be explored. Analysis and interpretation of laboratory data will be undertaken relative to pathophysiological principles and concepts."

What is important here is that the guts of this bill, if I may say so, are to change the scope of practice for nurse practitioners, to enable them to diagnose and to convey a diagnosis directly to their client, and to be able to prescribe, within the scope of practice that is going to be determined by regulations, to call for tests within that scope of practice, to order X-rays, mammograms as part of that expertise. This is quite important because this kind of training on top of their baccalaureate nursing training gives them an ability to deal with most of the problems that would come to the primary health care setting, gives them an opportunity to act quickly and to be able to ensure that people receive the treatment they need as quickly as possible.

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The next course is Advanced Health Assessment and Diagnosis, a similar kind of thing but much more focused

on how you diagnose, how you look at and weigh and determine between the various kinds of conditions or ailments that could present the kind of symptoms that are there. But it also includes the way of looking at the continuum of care. It's a course that very clearly says, "It's not enough for you to treat the disease; you have to look at that within the context of this person's life and look at whether" —

**Mr Pouliot:** I'm sorry. There's so much to learn. Such an exciting presentation does require — would you kindly please check if a quorum is present.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Acting Clerk at the Table (Mr Doug Arnott):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** For those who don't know and have never experienced the care of a nurse practitioner, knowing they have this kind of expertise and education will help them to accept the change in the primary care setting that may result from having nurse practitioners able to exercise the skills and talents they have.

The next course is Therapeutics in Primary Health Care, in other words, designed to develop knowledge, skill and competencies to manage health and injury through the whole range of therapeutic strategies: counselling, pharmacology, complementary medicine. We all had a very good discussion in this place about alternative forms of medicine. Nurse practitioners are very open to the various forms of healing that are possible.

Next is Roles and Responsibilities: This is part of the ethics of a nurse practitioner's job, to know where they need to be building additional knowledge, the preparation for an outcomes-based evaluation of services, helping them to have the skills to be able to participate in that part of health care, which we all know is going to become more important as we look at what we're doing in our restructured system.

The next is a practicum. They need to do what's called an Integrative Practicum course. It's in the final year of the program and it enables them to consolidate all they have learned in their courses and to practise within a setting of primary health care. It is very important that we understand that there is both knowledge-based and learning-based in the classroom, a theoretical base as well as very practical knowledge, that there is also a practicum attached.

The last element is about aboriginal communities, because many nurse practitioners, whether they are working in urban, rural or northern settings, will practise in the field of aboriginal health care. Aboriginal people are not quite as caught up as we are with the kind of status of the traditional physician-based health care system. They have a very holistic approach to their own lives, a healing approach to their own lives, and are very open to the kinds of concepts nurse practitioners have, so it is considered an integral part of the kind of training the nurse practitioners have.

I mentioned that in the 1970s, when nurse practitioners were there, they gradually went out of fashion. We



stopped educating them. The major reason for that was that we weren't providing the funding in a way that was possible. The big disappointment about the bill, quite frankly, is that the bill does not provide for a funding base for nurse practitioners. The minister said very clearly that they would be funded out of the various pots of money the ministry already has.

One of his assurances to try to prevent some of the backlash from physicians who see nurse practitioners as intruding into their field of practice was that they would not have access to some of the dollars that have gone into that area. This is a double-edged sword, then, because we need to find some way to fund the 420 or 422 nurse practitioners we expect to be available by 1999. The minister said something about many of them being in community health centres, so that's where we would see it.

But when we were doing the estimates, it was interesting to find that although \$103 million had been allocated in the estimates of 1996-97, only \$87 million of that community health centre funding had been flowed during that year, according to the interim estimates. In fact the estimates show that there is a decrease in the estimates this year of 2%, \$2,000,500 that will not even be in the estimates, will not be available at all for community health centres. This is a reason for us to be very concerned, because we are, all of us, engaged in passing legislation that all of us hope will facilitate a change in the delivery of health care, and yet at the very beginning we see a situation where many of these people may never be able to have the positions that we are enabling them to have.

I'd like to read a letter that was sent on June 3 to the Minister of Health, Jim Wilson. I'm going to read it right through. This is from Annette Hoop, who is a registered nurse and a bachelor of science of nursing. She said:

"Dear Minister Wilson:

"As a nurse practitioner student who will be graduating in August 1997, I would like to commend you for introducing the NP legislation this April. It is with anticipation that I await the second and third reading and the passing of this legislation. It is clear that the current status of the health care system necessitates the expanded utilization of nurses.

"The legislation that you introduced brings us one step closer to a system which supports NP practice; however, I have concerns that there has been little discussion regarding strategies for enabling NPs to practise throughout Ontario. Currently NPs practise primarily in community health centres or in globally funded group health centres. Unfortunately, the rarity of these...settings in northern and rural parts of Ontario makes NP utilization in these underserved areas difficult. Concrete, innovative mechanisms which permit NP practice must be implemented in order for the NP initiative to become a viable reality. The 1970s NP initiative was not as successful as it could have been due to lack of funding and work setting strategies. I am hopeful that history will not repeat itself.

"I am interested in knowing what strategies are being considered by your government. I understand that discussions regarding integrated health delivery systems are

currently taking place; however, it is clear that the development and implementation of a new system will take time. I am also concerned that nurses are not represented on the Northern Ontario Integrated Health Delivery System Task Force.

"Specifically, I am interested in knowing if there are interim strategies for the use of current and graduating NPs? For example, will health units be funded to hire NPs and will there be a funding mechanism permitting NPs to work independently or in collaboration with physicians? The need for these interim mechanisms is especially acute in underserved areas where communities lack access to primary health care providers. In these communities NPs want to work but have no work options.

"Most of the NPs who graduated last year," and there were 30 who graduated at the end of August last year, "are still unemployed due to legislative and funding barriers. I can only hope that all current and graduating NPs will soon have the opportunity to practise to our fullest capacity, providing innovative and comprehensive health care in our communities."

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I have another letter that was also sent to Minister Wilson on May 20. It is from Marilyn Butcher, who is a registered nurse and a nurse practitioner. She also begins by congratulating the government on introducing the legislation and urging all parties to support it, as we are tonight, but she goes on to say:

"As a nurse practitioner who has been unable to find employment due to the lack of legislative support, I respectfully suggest that the minister carefully consider the following:

"Integrated health care delivery systems may in the future prove to be effective in Ontario. However, the seamless system that is being discussed will take a considerable length of time to implement. Underserved areas cannot continue to wait until this system is up and running. Unemployed nurse practitioners should not have to wait for the evolution of a new system before finding employment.

"The ministry should consider a number of health care structures for NP employment. Community health centres provide exemplary primary care to their communities, but most Ontario communities do not have community health centres. The minister could consider sexual health/STD clinics in public health units as appropriate sites of NP employment. As well, there are many physicians in private practice who want to develop a collaborative practice with a nurse practitioner, but in the absence of a remunerative strategy, their practices are unable to support both care providers.

"Remuneration for nurse practitioners should be fair, given our expanded scope of nursing practice, and should reflect the added responsibility that the role demands. Registered nurses and nurse practitioners are key stakeholders in health care reform. Continuing forward with this legislation before the summer recess acknowledges both the tremendous need for nurse practitioners and the skill that we bring to our patients."

While we are here talking in such glowing terms about the possibility of nurse practitioners, let us listen to these



women who have taken the training and who are experiencing the difficulty of working in the field they have chosen. We know very clearly that in these days of contracting budgets it is going to be extremely difficult to fit this new practitioner into a system where everyone in the health care system is trying barely to hold on to what they have. Without a remunerative scheme, and the minister has certainly not announced one, this could all fall apart.

I notice that the member for Lambton is here. The member for Lambton in health estimates tried to get across to the parliamentary assistant and the deputy minister how frustrating it is for communities like his to have a community health care centre, as they do in Forest, and then not have the dollars to employ a nurse practitioner. He was saying that in his community the Rotary Club, I believe it was, had to raise the dollars to pay six months of the salary for the nurse practitioner, but they couldn't retain her because she could get 12 months of work in Toronto.

My point and the point of the member for Lambton is that unless we find some way of remunerating these very well trained people, we are not going to be able to utilize them in our communities, and that would be a real tragedy. I hope the members in the government who are joining with us today in supporting this bill will understand that the next step has to be a method of paying for this service, of being very clear that unless you actually can hire nurse practitioners, a lot of money, a lot of energy, a lot of hope, a lot of time is going into preparing people who may not have a position because the dollars aren't there.

I'm almost through, Mr Speaker. I want to do only one other issue, and that is the piece in the scope of practice that is missing that concerns nurse practitioners. That is the piece that does not enable them to refer directly to a specialist. They can refer only to a general practice physician, because all specialists get paid because they have a physician referral. There is no change in this act that enables that specialist referral to happen. That's important in primary health care settings because very often you come upon a situation where someone needs a specialist's attention immediately. Certainly in the obstetrical field that is often the case, or in the kind of reproductive issues that people have. But it may also happen in many other kinds of problems that people would bring to a primary health care setting.

Having to go through those steps is, first of all, more costly for us because it is a double referral. It basically says to the nurse practitioner: You are licensing me to do primary health care, but you don't trust me when the problem is serious and needs a specialist's attention. You are still saying that doctors are the only ones who can make that determination. That is a duplication in cost and a duplication in effort and it may create a serious delay where there is a serious health care problem.

I would urge the government, as they put this bill that is before us into place, to know that the demands over time to increase the scope of practice somewhat more as we readjust our thinking around who can be the gatekeeper of the system, whether it can only be physicians or whether we are prepared to understand that others have

the skills and the commitment, the training and the ability to make those determinations — I hope the government will keep in mind that those changes need to be made.

I know that my colleague from Beaches-Woodbine wants to add to this. I repeat again how pleased I am that we are at this stage and that we will be passing this bill. I hope it will be proclaimed very quickly so that we can ensure that the bill takes effect almost immediately, that the pent-up number of nurse practitioners are able to practise as they can. We will look forward to that day and we'll celebrate it with all the fine nurses who have worked so hard with so many different groups in collaboration to bring this about.

**Ms Lankin:** I am delighted to have an opportunity — sorry. I'm laughing because as I rise to my feet to speak to the bill, a number of the government members who were watching on television back there started to run in because they thought I was going to call a quorum. It's okay, I say to the member for Scarborough West.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** It's called conditioning.

**Ms Lankin:** A little bit of a Pavlovian response there.

I'm actually speaking to the bill, and delighted to be speaking to the bill. It is always an important occasion when a piece of legislation has such a tremendous consensus in the province of Ontario. I think this legislation has support from a great number of quarters, from people who have been looking at the need for change in our health care system, who have understood the importance of a shift to community-based delivery of care, a shift to a greater understanding of the importance of primary care and of the role of nursing and particularly the role of nursing diagnoses, which also has a very important focus on health promotion and on wellbeing. I think this step is one that is most welcomed by those who are interested in reform in the health care system.

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I'm not going to be speaking at length tonight because I believe a number of the important issues have been covered. I think the member for London Centre has very eloquently and articulately put forward both our support for this bill and our concerns about some areas we believe the government must also address. The area with respect to the scope of practice of nurse practitioners and referrals to specialists is very important. I think it's an area that has unfortunately been overlooked and one that continues the duplication in terms of the nature of services of medical doctors and nurse practitioners. I hope that would be addressed in the future.

Also the very important issue of ascertaining the funding mechanisms for hiring and paying nurse practitioners: It's one thing to have people who are able to practise in the province, but if there is not funding through global budgets and community health centres, or capitated budgets in health service organizations, or in comprehensive health organizations, or in group practices, if that funding isn't made available by the government, when the government has made it very clear that the OHIP fee-for-service funding is not available for nurse practitioners, it will be a pyrrhic victory that we will have achieved here tonight in conjunction with the work of many people over a great length of time who worked to bring this about.



I am pleased particularly to be here for this momentous occasion because, as I've said before to members across the floor, I had the honour and the privilege of serving the province in the portfolio of Minister of Health for a period of time. It was one of the most interesting and exciting jobs anyone could have. I feel such a passion for the important work of health reform that being here and present when a bill which is an important piece of that health reform will pass second and third reading is an important honour for me.

When we began looking at the need to restructure the health care system, to look at how you move the resources — because a lot of people have said that there were significant resources being expended and that those resources could be applied in a better way that would promote a healthier population — we started looking at how that shift could take place, that shift from illness treatment to health promotion, to illness prevention. We started to look at how important it was that government, in its other areas of expenditure, have the room to invest in what are referred to as the determinants of health, those things which keep people healthy in the first place: good nutrition, important emphasis on child nutrition; a good education; a clean environment; clean, safe housing; safety in our streets — all those things that build a health population.

The healthier your population is, of course, the better you can use your resources overall in the province and in the health care system. Through all of that, the role of community health became highlighted as a very important area. I'm pleased that during years where we were facing tremendous fiscal challenges in the government through the recession and we saw restraint beginning on government expenditures in a large number of areas, we were able within the health envelope to continue to expand, even in those very difficult times, the investment in community health centres and to expand the number of community health centres in the province.

I was very committed to continuing that because I believe that it is a critical point of entry for people to the health system in their community and that the community health centres have an opportunity to provide a multidisciplinary team approach to the delivery of health care services and that it is an important option that must be developed in our health care system to avoid the gatekeeper system through the OHIP fee for service. That focus on community health centres and the development of pilot projects for comprehensive health organizations and health service organizations was an important piece of that.

That led as well to the beginning of the review of primary health care, to bring the people together to indicate a real commitment to reforming primary health care in this province. Part of that was to look at who was involved in the delivery of primary health care. The issue of nurse practitioners arose as a key issue that needed to be addressed.

For those of you who may not be aware, there was a point of time historically in this province where there were nurse practitioners, where there was a university program and we were educating and graduating, producing nurse practitioners in this province a number of years

ago. That was done away with. We had moved away from encouraging nurses to go on to become nurse practitioners and from the use of nurse practitioners.

I remember one of the first challenges I had as Minister of Health was to deal with the regulated health professions legislation. That was a package of statutes being amended that amended how certain health services, health providers are regulated, things like the College of Physicians and Surgeons and the College of Nurses and a whole range of other health care providers. That package of legislation saw three different governments working on trying to arrive at a consensus out in the field among all of the professions, three different governments and eight different Ministers of Health. That's how many it took to get the job done.

When I finally was able to take part in the final stages of that, I have to say it really was the final stages. There may have been a couple of crises that were left that had to be sorted out between certain groups or professions around scopes of practice, but by and large, the work had been done over years by previous governments: by Tory governments, by Liberal governments and finishing up by our own government.

At that point in time I felt sorry that there hadn't been the work done on nurse practitioners because I would have liked to have moved forward very quickly on that, but recognized the need for that. In talking with people in the delivery of community health care and primary health care, I saw that there was a consensus re-emerging about the importance of the role of nurse practitioner. I began at that point in time to do the work with one of our sister ministries, the Ministry of Education and Training — at that time the Ministry of Colleges and Universities — to work with post-secondary academic institutions to reinstate the education program to educate and graduate nurse practitioners.

That took some work, both in terms of curriculum work and in terms of finding money yet again in the budget through that ministry to be able to provide program funding money to the university sector to re-establish that particular program. Also, the work began at that point in time to try and build a consensus about the nature of the legislation and the regulation that should be in place.

My successor, the former member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Ruth Grier, who took over as Minister of Health, worked very hard on ensuring that the funding was put in place to actually establish the nurse practitioners post-secondary education program. She was able to do that. As you heard, last year the first group of new nurse practitioners were graduated into this province. They are out there ready, awaiting the passage of this legislation and awaiting the establishment of funding mechanisms so that they can take their rightful and important place in contributing to the health of our population and to the more effective delivery of health services in our province.

Ruth was also the minister who I think brought together the final consensus with respect to the legislation. There was a lot of work. In these things, there are always competing interests from different health providers who are concerned with respect to the quality of delivery



of health care and how that relates to scopes of practice of various professions. There was a lot for the ministry at that time, and the minister, to work through.

I want at this moment to pay tribute very much to the staff of the ministry. They have done yeoman's service in working not just with those in the nursing profession — there are many in the nursing profession who have contributed to making this possible — but with many other health providers to bring about the consensus around this legislation. I think a tribute should be paid to the ministry staff and to Ruth Grier, the former Minister of Health.

I take the time to do that because, unfortunately, when the current Minister of Health finally delivered the piece of legislation which was drafted and ready to go and two years later we have it — I wouldn't be saying that if he had stood up and actually paid credit to Ruth Grier. It would have been a classy thing to do. It's unfortunate that he didn't see fit to do that.

This is a piece of legislation that does enjoy the support of all parties in this Legislature, which is reflective of the type of support that is out there among the public. If not long overdue, it's a bill whose time has come. It is a great pleasure to participate in the province of Ontario, in this Legislature, in actually passing very good legislation which will contribute to the wellbeing of the population. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to participate.

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**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Hudak:** I'm pleased to rise to comment. I appreciate the commensurate remarks from my comrades opposite, both the member for London Centre and the member for Beaches-Woodbine. In fact, the member for Beaches-Woodbine is correct; Ruth Grier, the Minister of Health in the previous government, did bring forward this legislation. It hadn't been brought into the House and we're pleased to bring that legislation forward for debate as part of this government, and very pleased with the support we're receiving from both opposition parties this evening.

Having listened to the member for London Centre, who did a very good job describing in plain language to the audience watching here tonight what it is that nurse practitioners will be doing, I think she's a little unfair to my comments when I talked about the red tape aspects. Technically, she's right, this legislation does expand the scope of practice, but for practical purposes these things are ongoing. Nurse practitioners are currently out there communicating diagnoses; they're prescribing certain drugs, limited by regulation after this bill; administering the drugs they prescribe; ordering ultrasounds; ordering X-rays, lab tests; directing ambulances; signing medical certificates of death.

The only difference now, is that before the nurse practitioner would have to run down the hall chasing a doctor to get the doctor to sign on to what had already been ordered, which was time that could be better spent. So when tomorrow comes, when this bill is passed, the nurse practitioners will be free so they won't have to chase the doctors, because they know how to do these

things very well. Important too for the red tape considerations of this legislation, they won't have to spend their time going through the 300-page protocols that they currently do, like I said with the example from Ottawa, 12 pages on rashes, having to update those things. Instead, they can devote their energy, their knowledge, their experience, the sum of their resources to providing quality patient care.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? I recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health to wrap up.

**Ms Lankin:** He just did it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Hudak has moved second reading of Bill 127. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Shall the bill be moved for third reading? It is agreed.

Mr Hudak moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Nursing Act, 1991 and to make consequential amendments to the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act, the Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991, the Respiratory Therapy Act, 1991 and the Vital Statistics Act / *Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les infirmières et infirmiers et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur la protection contre les rayons X, à la technologistes de laboratoire médical, à la Loi de 1991 sur les inhalothérapeutes et à la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that third reading pass? It is carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DE LA COLLECTIVITÉ

Mr Jim Brown moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 102, An Act to improve community safety by amending the Change of Name Act, the Ministry of Correctional Services Act and the Police Services Act / *Projet de loi 102, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité de la collectivité en modifiant la Loi sur le changement de nom, la Loi sur le ministère des Services correctionnels et la Loi sur les services policiers.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough West.

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** Thank you for the opportunity to highlight for members of the Legislature a number of the provisions of Bill 102, the Community Safety Act.

I feel the proposed legislation is a very important step towards making Ontarians feel safe and secure in their communities. It is a step that will help make our streets a little safer.

As the Solicitor General said last December when this bill was introduced, this government believes that every Ontarian has the right to feel safe in their communities. I believe one of the reasons this government was elected in June 1995 was our commitment to rebalance the justice system in favour of victims of crime and law-abiding citizens, instead of coddling criminals. Bill 102



is another example of this government's continued commitment to protect children, youth, women, men and families. This bill will make our streets safer and our communities more secure. It removes obstacles that prevent police and other parts of the justice system from doing their job: protecting the public.

Bill 102 amends the Police Services Act and the Correctional Services Act as well as the Change of Name Act, which is administered by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

I want to take a moment to speak briefly on each of the highlights of the bill. First of all, as members are aware, the police have long called for clear legal authority to publicize the names of criminals being released from jail who they believe pose a danger to law-abiding citizens. In fact, some police chiefs have been hesitant to identify paedophiles and other dangerous offenders out of fear of breaking privacy laws.

Dr Jim Cairns, the deputy chief coroner of Ontario, stated recently that "Chiefs of police have said... 'We now have a dangerous offender in our community — what do we do?'" Police chiefs well know some of the threats on the streets, yet they have been forbidden to say anything about dangerous offenders. This must be changed. This government is changing it through Bill 102 and its regulations.

Bill 102 will finally allow the police and other justice officials like correctional officials to notify the public of the release of dangerous offenders into their communities. It's about time.

With respect to the release-of-names component of the bill, it will give police and correctional officials the legislative authority, after assessing the risks posed by specific individuals, to disclose information about offenders who are about to be released into the community. These decisions will be made subject to regulations under the act which will clearly spell out the kind of information that may be disclosed, to whom it may be disclosed and the circumstances under which it may be communicated. We believe that decisions by police and correctional officials to disclose personal information will be made on a case-by-case basis in a responsible manner and in the interests of public safety. Manitoba and Saskatchewan have similar legislation.

Secondly, the bill will also close legal loopholes around the change-of-name process. I want to take a moment to emphasize the importance of the amendments Bill 102 proposes to the Change of Name Act. Currently there is no process to update criminal records and law enforcement orders to reflect name changes. In effect, that means a serial killer or other dangerous criminal can change his name to avoid being tracked by the law. That's wrong, and we are taking steps through the bill to right that wrong.

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To give you an example of how Bill 102 would improve things, if a convicted paedophile applied for a name change, he would not be able to hide a criminal record for sexual assault and other offences. That information would be reflected under his new name. If the individual in question applied to work in a day care, a children's aid society or as a volunteer for a Boy Scouts

organization, his justice records would be accessed as part of the screening process, preventing him from gaining access to kids.

In fact, the change-of-name component of Bill 102 puts Ontario on the cutting edge of criminal justice in Canada. This bill would make Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to close a legal loophole that may be assisting criminals.

What we are proposing in this bill has attracted the interest of other provincial governments and the federal government.

The amendments to the Change of Name Act will require that those who have a criminal record, pending charges or outstanding law enforcement orders against them must submit to a police records check if they try to change their names.

This will make sure that a person's new name will be linked to any justice records held on them and will provide a process for police to update information to reflect an individual's legal name change on the Canadian Police Information Centre or CPIC system. By allowing the linking of individuals to their criminal record, despite a change of their name, the Community Safety Act will result in improved law enforcement and investigation in areas such as restraining orders on spouse abusers and stalkers or drivers with licence suspensions.

This will make our streets safer and it will protect the most vulnerable in our society without any negative impact on people who don't have a criminal record. One of Ontario's most infamous criminals was in the process of changing his name from Paul Bernardo to Paul Teale.

Not surprisingly, Bill 102 is being well received. If you look at the media reports on the bill you will see favourable comments by victims' groups such as CAVEAT, school trustees and, as I mentioned, by the coroner's office.

The Hamilton Spectator said, "The Ontario government is taking an overdue and necessary step by introducing legislation giving police chiefs the right to publicize the names of...offenders released from prison." There were a whole host of positive articles in all the newspapers: the Toronto Sun, the Toronto Star, the Globe and Mail.

I also want to point out that the amendments we are proposing in Bill 102 are in keeping with the recommendations of the Christopher Stephenson inquest in 1993. Eleven-year-old Christopher Stephenson was killed in 1988 by repeat child rapist Joseph Fredericks. Fredericks was a baseball coach and there was no check done on him. The Stephenson inquest recommended greater public disclosure of offender information upon release and encouraged public cooperation with police background checks to ensure that records are accurate and current. Christopher's father, Jim Stephenson, hailed this bill as a valuable step towards protecting children from dangerous sexual predators.

In conclusion, I want to say that Ontario is the first province to implement such comprehensive procedures. These amendments will enhance victims' and community access to information at all stages of the criminal justice process, fulfilling the principles of the Victims' Bill of Rights.

As I said, they're in keeping with the recommendations made by the Christopher Stephenson inquest and support



the victim notification system of the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services.

Bill 102 is a long-overdue piece of legislation that will help police and other parts of the justice system to do all they can to protect the people of Ontario. The rights of victims, taxpayers and law-abiding citizens are more important than those of dangerous offenders.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** For the second time this evening I'm pleased to stand in my place and speak in support of a government initiative that is overdue. I'm glad it's here. It's good we have an opportunity to discuss it. There are some very sensitive issues in it, but I think the time has come to deal with these issues and it's important for the public to understand why we're having to deal with these particular matters at this point in time.

One of the most important aspects of this bill, as the member has stated, is an amendment to the Change of Name Act. Why this is necessary is that people with a criminal record have found it convenient in avoiding the law to apply for a name change to the registrar general. There really hasn't been the regulation in place to notify all the proper authorities that this is taking place, nor has the registrar general had the authority up till now to make a check for a criminal record or to demand that of that applicant.

This is very important as criminals have been making greater use of this loophole to avoid detection. It's an important regulatory change that should help stop some of this activity. I just want to say that the Liberal caucus is very supportive of that. I think, actually, this is just a beginning. I would encourage the government to do more.

The previous speaker alluded to the Christopher Stephenson case and he described that very well. There is actually more that both levels of government could do. The federal government could do more to protect society and so could we as a province. In fact, as of May 1995, about 20 of the recommendations that came out of the Stephenson inquiry, about 30% of these recommendations, had not yet been implemented. Some could be done at the federal level and more could be done at the provincial level.

Out of that inquest there were 71 recommendations, and if you count all the subrecommendations, there were 108 recommendations that were directed to 116 different governments, ministries, organizations and agencies, all aimed at enhancing the system's ability to deal with dangerous sexual predators such as Fredericks. Tonight's bill does go part way in correcting that and closing the gap of that 20% remaining and that's good.

I would encourage the government not only to finish up those recommendations, but also I would certainly lend my support in any request that the provincial government would want to make to the federal government for it to move its amendments. They would have to make some amendments to the Criminal Code and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act to fulfil all the recommendations that came out of the Stephenson inquest.

In fact, in 1995, then Liberal MPP Steven Offer introduced a private member's bill to amend the Ontario

Mental Health Act to facilitate the transfer of violent sexual predators from prison to secure mental health institutions for indefinite detention at the end of their sentence. That's something that we here in this place would have to consider. A lot of work has come out of private members' bills in the past. In 1995, the member for Burlington South, Cam Jackson, also brought in some private member's bills that dealt with victims' rights that I would say would be a complementary piece of legislation to this.

**2140**

What we're talking about tonight here in Bill 102 is legislation that's intended to permit justice officials to track offenders and notify the public about dangerous offenders about to be released into their communities. So this bill, in order to do that, amends the Police Services Act, the Ministry of Correctional Services Act and the Change of Name Act in the following manner.

The Police Services Act will be amended to permit the disclosure of personal information about individuals by police chiefs or by people designated by the chief for this purpose. The police services boards will be required to establish policies regarding such disclosure, including the nature of information to be disclosed, in which circumstances and to whom. Any such disclosure is deemed to be in accordance with the provincial and municipal laws governing freedom of information. This is meant to specifically authorize police to warn communities about dangerous offenders about to be released back into the community.

In some law enforcement officials' opinion over the last few years there has been some reluctance and some hesitancy to do this, and there is certainly a dissenting opinion to this. Many of the advocacy groups that support the rehabilitation of offenders have felt and have brought the position forward that if you disclose offenders' names being released into the community who potentially pose a new threat and danger to the community, you'll drive those people underground.

We've found, unfortunately, over the last few years with all the attempts we have made to bring the very best rehabilitation into our prison system that it's very difficult to rehabilitate some of the very worst sexual predators we have in the criminal justice system. I think, in order to protect our communities, we will have to resort to this sort of notification of those extremely dangerous offenders being released into our communities. I think it's a tough measure whose time is due and I support that.

This act also changes the Ministry of Correctional Services Act. It's to be amended by explicitly permitting regulations to be added to authorize persons employed in the administration of the act to disclose personal information about individuals and to set out the type of information that may be disclosed, in which circumstances and to whom. This will authorize correctional institutions also to warn communities about dangerous offenders about to be released. So there are two areas of the criminal justice system that get this authorization: the police, but also the officials in our correctional institutions who are about to release dangerous offenders.

The Change of Name Act, governed by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, specifically by the



registrar general, will be amended in order to prevent individuals from avoiding their previous records by changing their names. As I stated earlier and as the previous speaker Mr Brown had mentioned, even Paul Bernardo was attempting to do this. So this is a loophole that really needs to be changed.

This amendment will require persons applying for a legal name change to disclose whether they have any criminal record or if there are any outstanding law enforcement orders or pending criminal charges against them. So before registering any name changes, the registrar general must also clear the request with the Ministry of the Solicitor General to ensure that people changing their names do not have criminal records or outstanding criminal charges against them. This is intended to catch those individuals who lie on their name change application. So again this is additional protection for our communities from offenders trying to circumvent the law by lying on their name change application forms.

In either case, if people applying for a name change disclose that they have a criminal record or charges outstanding against them, or if they're caught by the Solicitor General, their application will not be processed until they provide a police record check revealing particulars of all criminal convictions, charges, outstanding law enforcement orders and pending criminal charges. The registrar general must also advise the Solicitor General if a person who provided a police records check is given a change of name, allowing updates of the records and attaching criminal histories to the new name.

The bill also permits the sharing of information between the registrar general and the Solicitor General, and the Solicitor General is further authorized to disclose relevant information about a name change to other ministries or agencies for law enforcement purposes.

It's interesting to note that when this bill was given first reading back in December of last year, the Ministry of the Solicitor General officials were advising at that time there were no mechanisms in place to allow this to happen. So it is very important that the ministry have the resources required to make this happen because it is going to take some resources. With all the cutbacks we have seen with the various ministries, it's very important that the resources be there, because this is going to take some time, it's going to take some bureaucracy and probably some technological changes to get it going. But I think it's going to be very important to make sure those resources are in place and I would ask the parliamentary assistant to ensure that will happen.

This legislation already authorizes the registrar general to refuse a name change if he or she believes that the name change is intended for an improper purpose, subject to the right of the applicant to appeal to a court. None of these amendments reflects specific recommendations contained in the Stephenson report, but they're more or less in keeping with the spirit and the intent of those recommendations. So that's why I think it's very important that this bill get quick passage from this House, that we support this so we can make sure the various ministries involved in this change have the tools to do this job. I think it is paramount that we protect our communities from offenders who pose a danger of reoffending.

#### **The Acting Speaker:** Comments or questions?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I want to thank the member for Timiskaming for his excellent contribution. Once again we see the consensus that has developed in this Legislature on wanting to meet the needs as exist in the community. There may be some quibbles over details, but I think the initiative which is designed to enhance community safety is going to receive the support of everyone. What you find with all these initiatives, however, is that you require the resources — financial and staff resources — to be able to implement these policies. In many jurisdictions there are people who will engage in the rhetoric or will even go as far as to establish a framework or a piece of legislation, but they don't take advantage of the opportunity then to provide the necessary resources to carry out the provisions of the legislation.

My friend the Attorney General was in St Catharines either earlier this year or last year, where he made an announcement about a victims' rights office, for want of a better word. The idea is commendable, it is good, it is what people are looking for, everybody in the House has spoken on it some time in agreement, but one of the problems is that the resources to staff that office aren't what they should be even to this point in time. I think it's important that if you're going to have these crime-fighting initiatives, you have the necessary resources. Again I say you can't cut taxes and still have those financial resources to cover these kinds of things. They are commendable initiatives, but I'd like to say to people that if you want them to work, you have to be prepared to pay for them, and I think most people are.

2150

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I did have a very excellent speech prepared on Bill 102, and in listening to my colleagues the member for Nipissing and the member for St Catharines, and anticipating hearing my colleague the member for London Centre, I feel it will not be necessary for me to place on the record my support of this bill. Again, as with the bill previously dealt with this evening, it is very encouraging when we can have legislation on which all three parties agree. I am very appreciative of the fact that we are going together, all three parties, in agreement on both these bills this evening.

I'm really standing to comment on the contribution to the debate by the member for Timiskaming. You did keep to your word of 12 to 15 minutes. I think that you have been extremely fair, and we all appreciate that at this late hour, so I will also show the same commitment. Thank you very much.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** I will also forgo my speaking time, and I'll just do a couple of very brief minutes, also commenting on the excellent presentation and the understanding that my colleague has of the bill. As he says, we are in support. We understand it is something that is needed. I think we owe it to our communities.

I want to make one quick point, without repeating the extremely succinct points my colleague has made on the bill. We should do everything possible not to have criminals hide behind a new name. I think it is something



that perhaps has happened in the past, but I don't think our community would accept the fact that a criminal, someone wanted who has been involved in a variety of criminal acts, just changes their name and the activities of the person will not go along with their new name.

We have to do everything we can to protect every member of our society. This bill is not a total solution but will go a long way to give the power, not only to the proper authority here locally in our own government but also to our police forces, to make sure that anyone who commits any crimes towards our society and wants to get away just by changing their name won't be able to do that. I think this will assist. This will give the tools necessary to our police and peace of mind to our communities which so much deserve our full protection, so I'm very pleased to support it.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Timiskaming has two minutes.

**Mr Ramsay:** I would just like to say that I appreciate the comments of the members following my speech. I would like to reiterate what the member for St Catharines had stated, as I had in my speech, that it's very important that the resources be there so that when this program is implemented it can work well, it can be effective and do the job it was meant to do and protect the communities, as we're all working to do here in this assembly tonight.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I am pleased to speak briefly on this act, which again all parties are supporting. The issues that are involved in this are very important to those who have been victims of crime and those of us in the community who understand the vulnerability that all of us have when someone decides to break the law.

The provisions here have been asked for over a period of time, not just by victims' advocacy groups but by law enforcement officers, by prosecutors, by those who are engaged in local safe community work, so it is important for us to be very clear that there is a real demand in the community to see our laws and our actions focusing on the pain and distress that often result from criminal activity.

I would say that I'm very concerned when I hear my friend from Scarborough West talk about one person's rights being more important than another person's rights in our community. I can understand the sentiment entirely, and I can assure the member that in my work with victims of crime it is very hard for those who have been victimized not to have an impression that the rights of the victims seem much less than the rights of the accused. I remind the member, however, that every citizen, whatever their situation, does have rights and that we could be the accused the next time. It is extremely important for us to think about people like Guy Paul Morin, to think about those who are often convicted of crimes and to know that those people are not always guilty, and even if they are guilty, they have rights.

One of the things that disturbs me in the current thrust about law and order is a lack of understanding about the need to respect the rights of the other if your point of punishment is to remind them that they have not respected the rights of their victims. It's really very much

a conundrum for those of us who feel deeply on behalf of victims to also have to recognize that unless we are protecting the rights of those who are accused of crimes, as well as the victims, balancing those, not putting one out of kilter with the other, there is a real difficulty.

With that caution, I'd like to talk just a little bit about the various elements. The Change of Name Act is an important one. This has been used as a mechanism to try and hide the fact that someone has a criminal record or has outstanding orders or has pending criminal charges. All of that is very clear. It is often hard for law enforcement officers to follow through on the kinds of tips they receive if someone has been able to change their name, and certainly this has come up in a number of cases.

The member for Timiskaming I think mentioned the Paul Bernardo case, as did the member for St Catharines, and we all know that Mr Bernardo and Ms Homolka were in the process of getting their names changed to Teale and that that could very well have confused things. I would also say, however, that at the time they were trying to change their names they didn't have pending criminal charges against them and didn't have a law enforcement order against them, and it might not have prevented them from changing their names had that name change gone through in a fashion.

But it is good that this bill gives the registrar general the right to refuse to change a name, because in cases like that where the time was out of joint, quite frankly, and it was all happening at the same time, if the registrar general is informed by law enforcement officers that it would be wise not to grant the name change, this gives permission to the registrar general to withhold that permission.

The issue of the bill allowing the Ministry of the Attorney General to obtain information from the registrar general's records that may be relevant to a change of name and make further disclosures is a bit puzzling to me, and like the other two pieces of the bill, it is not quite clear to what extent this kind of information may be used.

In the Ministry of Correctional Services Act, for example, the bill permits the disclosure of personal information about individuals by the Ministry of Correctional Services, but the nature of the information that may be released, by whom it may be released, to whom it may be released and the circumstances in which it may be released are all going to be left to regulation. What we are doing tonight is giving a blanket permission without knowing what those regulations are that enable the Ministry of Correctional Services to disclose personal information about individuals. It is a very serious thing for us to be giving that kind of blanket permission, because there is such a thing that when we as a society have someone incarcerated, they still have a right to some personal privacy. It is not clear that this personal information could only be released in terms of protecting victims, and that may be the way it turns out. I hope it is, but it isn't really clear in what we're passing what the limitations are on the release of that information.

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We don't have the experience we have in terms of the Police Services Act, where we have seen, as the parlia-



mentary assistant suggested, quite judicious use of the discretion police chiefs have had to release information, a very, very clear discretion about when that might be more harmful than not releasing the information. We don't have the benefit of that kind of experience with the Ministry of Correctional Services because the disclosure of information has simply been forbidden in the way we're talking about here.

While we're certainly going to be prepared to pass this bill, I sincerely hope the ministry is going to be carefully monitoring what happens with this bill, that when they make the regulations, they will be very clear that again this should only happen when there is reason to fear for the safety of another and not happen as a routine matter that might infringe upon the privacy rights of an individual.

Simply because someone has done a criminal act, that does not mean they are no longer a citizen with a citizen's rights. We have to balance the protection of the rest of our society with those rights, because once we begin to infringe on citizens' rights by making a judgement call about whose rights are more important than another's, we begin to undermine our own rights. We have to be very, very careful how we go about that.

Again, in the Police Services Act the disclosure of personal information by chiefs of police or their designates, the nature of that information, the way it's released and the circumstances under which it's released are to be set out in regulations. I hope the example police chiefs have generally set in terms of their previous discretion on this matter will impact on the setting of those regulations and that the government will be very, very aware of the caveat many of the police people in this province have on this.

There is a fear that this could drive people underground and that the normal kind of surveillance over them to make sure they are following conditions of their release would be impossible, that they would simply disappear. I think we need to take fairly seriously that concern and be sure that in our regulations we're looking at this release of information in such a way as to minimize the possibility that the release of that information could endanger the community rather than making it safer, because we know that is not our purpose in passing this bill.

I am fearful that these bills, once passed, may give a false sense of security in our communities. If people imagine that if anyone has been released from prison, they are going to know whether or not they're in their neighbourhood, that is not what this is designed to do, and certainly not when we are talking about the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services Act, which covers people who are in jail only for two years less a day — generally speaking, not always but generally speaking, fairly minor offences and not the kind of offences, generally speaking, where the general public is at risk. Yes, there are people who have committed sexual offences who are in provincial jails, there's no question about that, but certainly an examination of the statistics shows that those people are not as likely to have committed their sexual acts upon strangers but within a family or within a very close kind of circumstance.

We just have to be aware that having these tools may help us in some instances to be sure of being able to create a better sense of community safety, but we mustn't ever give the impression that these tools are the be-all and end-all in terms of keeping communities safe. They aren't.

In my work with victims' groups I have always cautioned them about whether or not this in and of itself is as effective a tool as many have thought it was. It doesn't mean we shouldn't do it, it just means we shouldn't have any illusions that as a mechanism it is necessarily going to create the level of safety anyone victimized by crime wants to have. The fear factor will still be there, and the reality is that this will not necessarily produce results in terms of calming those fears that many victim groups hope it will when they put this forward as a real demand. I think we just have to have that in mind.

Having said that, we certainly are going to support the bill. We're going to be watching very carefully, as I'm sure will all the people who look after civil liberties issues. We're going to want to be sure this is used with discretion and in cases where it will have the result that's intended for public safety and not used to create a further punishment of people who have already fulfilled their term in prison if that's not necessary. We certainly hope that balancing act we have seen police chiefs exercise with discretion will continue to be exercised with discretion.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I just wanted to acknowledge at this time both the remarks of the member for London Centre and the previous remarks of the members for Timiskaming and Scarborough West.

As some of you know, part of the catapult for this legislation was the recommendations of the Stephenson inquiry. The Stephenson issue arose because of the terrible tragedy that occurred in my riding of Brampton South at the time, and I'm going to take the opportunity to let the Stephenson family know. As constituents of mine they deserve to know about the debate tonight and the support of all three parties with respect to the recommendations of that inquiry. I want to thank you and thus end my remarks.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** I'm going to be uncharacteristically brief because we have canvassed a lot of the issues associated with this, but I want to underline one more time, if I may, the need for resources.

I hear a lot of people with some pretty strong rhetoric when it comes to fighting crime, and many of us are very strong on fighting crime. Coming from the community I do where there's been some high-profile crime taking place, I can assure you that the people of St Catharines have no sympathy for those who perpetrate crimes upon others and a lot of sympathy for victims of crime. I know personally victims of crime, very well, some of them, and I've had long discussions with the individuals directly affected and with their families. When I hear stories about how various governments and various people in

political campaigns want to undertake very strong law and order measures, I simply hope they explain to the population how much they cost.

I think it's worth the cost, I think it's worth the investment, but very often a lot of these ideas are put out — I'm not associating that with this bill as much as some other initiatives — and they are extremely costly. I think for the protection of the community they're important. This bill is one of the steps.

I want to pay tribute to Mrs de Villiers, who has been one of the prominent leaders of the effort to look at victims' rights. I happen to know Doug and Donna French in St Catharines very well. They've gone through some very traumatic times and very sad and tragic times. I can think of another victim almost killed by an individual who was saved by an OPP officer. This victim had been kidnapped, taken to around Paris, Ontario, assaulted and probably would have been killed had this retired OPP officer not come along on a tractor to effect a saving of this person. The person who was alleged to have committed the crime and indeed did commit the crime is now in jail for life because that person had already killed somebody else, one or two other people, during this spree.

When you talk to victims themselves, the terror that's inflicted upon them, the concern that whoever is released, as the member for Scarborough West expressed, back to the community is going to perhaps commit another crime — we can't always tell, but if there's a likelihood, those people live in terror. They're almost a captive in their own homes.

I would hope that nobody could change their name to avoid this kind of detection, and this bill addresses that. On pieces of legislation, I simply urge the initiators and the promoters of this legislation to make sure you have the necessary resources.

The ideas are good. I don't think very many people are very sympathetic to those who carry out crimes. We're

sympathetic to the circumstances that breed criminals, the difficult social circumstances that point some people in that direction, but we cannot excuse crime because of those circumstances, nor can we excuse crime when it is committed by a deranged individual, because paramount must be the protection of the innocent in our society.

Everyone in the House is going to agree with this bill. As I mentioned before, there are some minor details with which there may be some differences as expressed by the member for London Centre, but you may be assured that we will be happy to see this legislation pass. We will want to ensure in the estimates process or in other areas that those resources are there and we'll support the minister in his efforts to secure those resources from the treasury, from Management Board of Cabinet and from the finance minister and the cabinet as a whole so our communities can be protected. More and more, whether it's apparent or it's real, people are concerned about crime and violent crime, and justifiably so. I believe this bill will go partway to deal with some of that crime and for that reason deserves the support of all members of the House.

**The Speaker:** Mr Brown has moved second reading of Bill 102. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Mr Jim Brown:** I ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on administration of justice.

**The Speaker:** So ordered.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker:** Mr Johnson has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

It now being before 12 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 2215.*



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**Assemblée législative  
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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 23 June 1997**

**Lundi 23 juin 1997**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 juin 1997

*The House met at 1333.*

*Prayers.*

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to begin routine proceedings today with question period, followed by the deferred vote on Bill 129, followed by members' statements and ministers' statements, and then to proceed through as normal to motions.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Environment. We have seen an air quality crisis develop in Ontario under your charge and under your responsibility. Our research has shown so far that on 18 occasions in the first 23 days of June the air quality level in the city of Toronto has reached the "unacceptable/unsatisfactory" rating by Environment Canada.

That means that on almost 75% of the days so far, on what has not been a very hot month, the air quality level has been unacceptable in the city of Toronto. Smog is creating havoc with people's lives. People who have breathing problems, people who have asthma are finding it very difficult so far.

What have you done? You've cut 92 air monitoring stations. You have left 13 communities across the province without any air monitoring facilities whatsoever. You've cut your staff by one third. Simply, you've abandoned the tools you need to monitor the air quality in Ontario. We're starting to see the results very clearly.

We have a crisis. Will you commit to bring in emergency legislation before the end of today's session to deal with this crisis in Ontario and take some steps to rectify the problem before the end of the summer?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I don't think air quality problems are new to Ontario; they're not new to the greater Toronto area. They are a serious problem that this government is dealing with in a more aggressive fashion than any previous governments have.

We are, as you know, updating our air quality standards, which have been left dormant for some 20 years. We introduced just a month ago new volatility gas regulations to improve the air quality of Ontario. We introduced a new PM10 standard for particulates, which had never been introduced by previous governments. We

are focusing on this effort. We are attacking this particular problem in the most logical and reasonable fashion possible.

**Mr Agostino:** As usual, the minister failed to answer the question. Very clearly, we have seen so far, 75% of the days in the month of June, the air quality level in the city of Toronto has reached the unsatisfactory level. That to me does not seem to be dealing with this problem. What have you done? Absolutely nothing.

You've committed on over 25 occasions to bring in vehicle emissions testing in Toronto, and Ontario. On over 25 occasions you're on record as saying you're going to do it, and you've wasted time. You've gone to the United States, you've taken trips, you've run pilot projects, but the reality as of today is that we're going to go through another summer in this province of heavy pollution, heavy smog. You have responsibility to do something about it, and you've failed.

Fifty per cent of the air pollution in this province is caused by bad vehicle emissions. The testing would help minimize that. The tests would reduce that, Minister, and you've done absolutely nothing except talk about it. Today, will you commit to this Legislature when you plan to bring in vehicle emissions testing? Give us a time line, because so far you have failed on 25 occasions on the commitment you have made.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** There are good vehicle emissions testing programs in North America and there are bad ones. We will bring one in in due course that will be a good one, but we are going to be cautious in how we approach this problem because there have been so many failures in the 32 states and the one province in Canada that have tried this before. When we introduce a program, we will have a program that will work and that will have an effect on the emissions going into the air and will control those emissions.

**Mr Agostino:** Frankly, we don't believe you, because you've said this before. On at least 25 occasions we have you on record as talking about this program. The pilot project's been completed; you haven't released the information. Your trip to the United States has been completed; you haven't released that information.

Minister, you don't understand. By your own words, 1,800 people a year in this province die due to poor air quality; \$365 million is added to health care. Let me put it in simple terms: Two to three people a day die in Metro Toronto as a result of poor air — two to three people a day in Metro Toronto alone.

Municipalities are tired of waiting. Metro Toronto council passed a resolution last week asking for permission to run vehicle emissions programs. The chair, Joan King, said, "We've waited for the province to do something for a year and we've said, 'If you're not going



to do something, give us the tools and we can do it.” The municipalities are getting frustrated. They understand the difficulty. You seem to be the only one who does not understand. I’m astonished today that you again would stand up in this House and not give us a clear date and commitment for vehicle emissions testing.

I’m going to ask you again, Minister, if you won’t do it, will you give municipalities the power and the funding to run the programs and take over a job that you simply don’t seem to have the responsibility or courage to do?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I am indeed concerned about people who have trouble with the quality of air in Ontario. As I’ve said in this Legislature before, 50% of the problems relate to trans-border pollution and 50% of the problems are here. Part of that 50% relates to vehicle emissions, so we are looking at that part as a real opportunity to improve the air quality.

I might also remind the member that while there are premature deaths relating to air quality, there are premature deaths relating to other hazards we have; smoking, for instance. We have about 20 premature deaths in the greater Toronto area as a result of tobacco.

We have a number of problems to address. We are addressing this one more aggressively than any previous government has. We will come up with a good vehicle emissions program.

**Mr Agostino:** When?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** When we have it right. We don’t have it right quite yet but we will have it right. When it is introduced it will get real results for the people of the greater Toronto area.

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#### CHILDREN’S SERVICES

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last week I asked you about amendments and what you have done on amendments to the Child Protection Act, what you’ve done with them for better protection of children the children’s aid societies themselves feel are being threatened today. Today, the way the law is, it allows more protection for abusive parents than it does for abused children.

After that question last week, we again spoke to a number of people in the field, to learn that you have done absolutely nothing. Not a call to those who’ve supplied you with information. Your ministry has done nothing to pull together some sort of task force to actually draw up legislation. You refuse to appoint a child advocate, someone that would take on the leadership role you have refused to take on. When are you going to take that small, first step to introduce amendments to legislation? When are you going to show some leadership, Minister?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** The honourable member, not to put too fine a point on it, is in error in the information she’s providing the House. We’ve had extensive consultation with the Association of Children’s Aid Societies in terms of trying to develop steps that need to be done. She should be aware — I’m assuming she is aware — that we are completely restructuring children’s services in this

province to try and make sure that we are taking our resources and focusing on intervention and prevention. She should also be aware of the \$45-million announcement that we made with the Premier a month or so ago.

One of the significant components of that is to screen babies at birth, newborns, to try and identify at that very early stage. She should also be aware that we’ve already tendered a contract to do the computer database that has been recommended. She should also be aware that in the budget we announced \$15 million in additional resources that we could have to support responding to the recommendations.

I categorically reject her characterization of what is happening. We have taken steps; we will continue to take steps.

**Mrs Papatello:** Mr Speaker, have you noticed that whenever we ask these ministers questions, we’ve got it all wrong? Have you noticed it’s us? We’ve got it all wrong. Let me say this, Minister: You have social workers on the front line dealing with children in crisis today. These are different from children who need that instant initiation from government programs such as you describe. I am talking about children who are in crisis and social workers who have the highest levels of caseloads ever. They don’t have time for training new staff people, let alone getting them out there.

The children’s aid societies themselves don’t have the funding for training, and given the state of the crisis for children under their view today, will you at least, at minimum, restore the funding cuts that you have made? I may say you’ve made them blindly, without any thought as to the impact of those cuts. Minister, will you restore that funding today?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** If the honourable member had listened to what is being said at many of the inquests that are occurring, resources and how those resources are applied are only one of many steps that need to be taken to improve the system. For example, one of the things the ministry has just completed is a complete review of the standards for handling cases to see how children’s aid societies are meeting those. It’s the first time any government has gone out and done that. We have indeed done that, and that is identifying further things we need to do work on.

We already spend over \$800,000 to assist children’s aid societies in training. We will be increasing that amount of money. We know we need a better risk assessment mechanism. We’ll be announcing that this week. There are a number of steps we have taken and will continue to take while we improve the system.

**Mrs Papatello:** There are other agencies that you fund for child and youth programs, kids who have witnessed abuse or have been abused at home. Last week, you sent a letter to women’s shelters across the province indicating that you’ve now cut by 20% the youth and child programs those women’s shelters provide. Day after day, we ask you to show leadership. The coroner’s inquests that are being held on those children are indicating a lack of leadership by you and your ministry.

We beg you to do more for these kids in crisis and at the same time you are cutting more, in this case, children and youth who have witnessed or have been abused in



their homes and are now in shelters. Minister, when are you going to stand up and protect children?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect, perhaps the honourable member has not been listening to the steps I have announced. I've talked about what we've done; I've been talking about what we're doing. We are going to increase resources. We said that very clearly in the budget. We're increasing resources for training. We'll also increase resources for children's aid workers to support when they have children coming in their care who have been witnesses to abuse. We've been very clear about those steps we are taking.

In addition, we've also been very clear that we will review the legislation. I want to make sure the experts who will advise us on doing that will give us the input we need on the key questions about whether the balance is right in the legislation or whether it's the way the legislation is being used by those on the front lines. Those are important questions.

She may think she has a simple answer to them. That's certainly not what I've been hearing from the experts, and we want to make sure we take appropriate steps.

#### CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. In the recent budget, the Minister of Finance went on at length about the fact that \$15 million was to be allocated for responding to the Child Mortality Task Force. Can you tell us, Minister, how much of that \$15 million will go to hiring more case workers at Ontario's 55 children's aid societies?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Whether or not we need additional case workers is certainly one of the issues that need to be considered, but before we do that, as the honourable member may know, there are a number of other steps — the recommendations from the coroner's inquest — the task force has talked about which are equally important: the way by which workers judge the risk; the way the legislation is being used; training budgets; increasing training. There are a number of steps that need to be put in place to make sure the system we have is working as well as it can; that people who are in that system can work as well as they can. That certainly is another issue we need to consider.

**Mr Hampton:** I didn't hear an answer to my question. What I heard was evasion. Perhaps you can explain this: The reality is that many children's aid societies are being overwhelmed by their case loads. In Simcoe county, for example, the children's aid society case load in the first five months of this year was already more than two times last year's total. Social workers are carrying the highest case loads they've had in 15 years, and you stand up here and say that money is not the issue, more case workers isn't the issue.

What we find confusing is this: Your government, through the tax scheme you've arranged, is going to have all kinds of money for people whose incomes are over \$100,000 a year. Bay Street executives are going to cash in on your tax gifts, yet when we ask you time and time

again about children, you don't have any money. Minister, can you explain how you have money for people who are already wealthy through your tax scheme but you have no money for children who are —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect to the honourable member, who may wish to attempt to make a political point on this, we do indeed have resources available for children's aid societies, for high-risk prevention programs. As I said in answer to the previous question and I will repeat again, we've put forward \$45 million for high-risk and prevention activities. We are restructuring the entire children's services to try and do exactly what has been recommended: that we need more of those resources on intervention and prevention.

I would also like to mention the \$800,000 we have in training. We will increase that to help them train their workers to deal with a situation. There are many steps we have taken and that we will continue to take to improve the system because we take those recommendations we've heard extremely seriously. A lot of thought and effort have gone into them and we want to make sure this government is responding expeditiously to them.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I understand there's a bit of a din going on. Thank you.

1350

**Mr Hampton:** I gather members in the Conservative caucus don't think this is an important question. They'd rather carry on their private conversations.

The minister tries to spin a good line.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Hampton:** You don't like it. That's the reality. We raise important questions about child welfare and you people carry on as if it's not a serious issue. That's the reality around here.

The problem is this: If we look at the budgets, this year there's another 2% cut to child and family intervention. It means that you've cut more than \$7 million out of child and family intervention since you became the government. You can spin figures all you want. When we look at the budgets of children's aid societies, they have been cut; when we look at your own internal ministry budget for child and family intervention, it has been cut another 2% this year. You can spin all the numbers you want. The bottom line is, you have money for people who are wealthy, but for kids who are at risk, for kids who don't have resources, you don't have any money. Can you explain how that is?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Well, 655,000 low-income families and individuals will pay no Ontario income tax as a result of the changes that this government is bringing in, and that will help strengthen the financial bases for many of those families. Perhaps they do not believe that \$140 million for low-income families to help them afford quality child care — perhaps they think that is insignificant. Perhaps they think the \$800,000 for training is insignificant. Perhaps they think the \$45 million for intervention and prevention in terms of high-risk families is insignificant. Perhaps they don't agree that we should have \$15 million in the budget to help respond to those recommendations.



If the honourable member, when he and his party were in power, had had as much concern for child welfare as they now claim today, perhaps they would not have cut child welfare budgets themselves.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I would say to the Comsoc minister: Bottom line, you're cutting kids and you're giving money to the wealthiest people in this society.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. New question, leader of the third party.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** To the government House leader, in the absence of the Premier: I'm going to bring over a copy of a modern-day Magna Carta. You may not remember the Magna Carta. King John was forced to sign it at Runnymede in the year 1215. It stands for the principle that, before governments pass laws, before kings try to make laws, they have to at least consult with the people. They cannot pass laws unilaterally without letting people know what's happening.

You're trying to shepherd through this House rule changes that will allow you to throw something on the table on Monday and pass it into law by Thursday. King John would be envious; in fact dictators in the modern world would be envious. Can you tell us why you need those kinds of powers, why you need to take us back before the years of King John? Can you tell us that, Minister?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I suspect King John and many other people who support democratic principles would say that within —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson:** I will simply say in terms of the democratic principles of the standing order changes being proposed that they do allow for more debating time for the members of this House; they do allow for more individual members to be involved in the debate of this House; they do involve allowing members to abstain if that's the choice of the members of this particular House; they do involve the privileges of the independent member in this House and allowing that independent member more rights and privileges in this House. I would say the democratic principles in terms of this House are being enhanced by the standing order procedures we are proposing to bring forward.

**Mr Hampton:** The salient part of that answer is that the government House leader thinks King John was a democrat. King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta. I think what we realize here is that the Premier is not very good with his numbers and you're not very good with history.

Democracy is not just about which member here gets to speak. It's also about the opportunity for the press to scrutinize your legislation; it's about the opportunity for the press to have the time to put information out; it's

about the opportunity for the public to read and understand what you're trying to pass. That's what you're trying to take out of the democratic process.

Under your rules, essentially people who sit here and try to report on what's happening become irrelevant. If you introduce it on Monday, before their reports get to the public you've passed the law. The public is shut out of the democratic process. Do you not understand that? That's the sum total effect.

**Hon David Johnson:** What I understand is that in 1992 the government of the day proposed to bring forward changes to the standing orders and indeed did at that time. The most notable aspect of those changes to the House procedures was a time allocation provision. It's interesting that the leader of the party that first brought forward the time allocation motion would take the sort of approach he is taking.

In addition to the provisions I've noted, many of which are in place in the federal House at present and seem to work well there, one other provision is a requirement that this House actually vote on a budget. In seven of the last 10 years, there has not been a vote. Is that not a democratic thing to do, actually vote on a budget? Is that not something the people of Ontario would expect us to do? I think that's a good thing.

**Mr Hampton:** The government House leader refers to the federal Parliament. We looked at the federal Parliament, and nowhere do they have the capacity to introduce a piece of legislation on Monday and pass it into law by Thursday. In fact, no Parliament across Canada has that power or is seeking that power. Your government, and your government alone, seeks to rush through legislation at such a pace that you shut the press out of their proper role in a democracy, of reporting, and you shut the public out of having an opportunity to understand whether you're passing a good law or a bad law. Your government, and your government alone, seeks to have those almost dictatorial powers.

1400

Tell me this, Minister: Why should a government whose hasty and thoughtless actions have made such a mess of the family support plan, brought in the Bill 26 omnibus legislation, made a mess of hospital closings, made a mess of your megacity scheme — why should a government that's been reckless and thoughtless in all those things have the power now to ram through legislation in less than three days?

**Hon Mr Johnson:** The leader of the third party might have added: a government that has reduced the deficit of the province from the \$11 billion you left us, a government that's got Ontario back on track with the economy —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon David Johnson:** We're a government that has reduced taxes, reduced the deficit, reduced unemployment, that's got this economy back on track.

The previous government introduced, through the closure motion, through the time allocation motion, the ability to put a bill through from second reading to third reading in five days, effectively. I have stated categorically that we will not reduce that time. At the end of the



day, whenever this debate is finished, you can rest assured that this government will not reduce that time that you brought in in 1992.

### HATE LITERATURE

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question is to the Attorney General. I'm rising on an issue that is of serious concern to the people in my riding but I believe also to people throughout Ontario.

A week ago last Friday some literature was distributed by a group from outside my riding to students at a high school and to the residents living in the immediate vicinity. What it does is it excoriates a religion and at the same time takes a negative and hateful view of students simply because of their religion. As you can imagine, there's been a response within that constituency, within Weston. In fact there's been a response by the hate crimes unit of the Metropolitan Toronto Police.

Attorney General, I rise today to ask you if you're aware of the information that's been conveyed to you by the Metro police and when we might expect from you the decision that's required on this particular case.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I concur with the member that this is something that cannot and should not be tolerated. The police are investigating. I personally have had no contact with the police. Generally, the procedure is that the police investigate complaints that come to their attention. If the police need legal advice, they have access to crown law officers who can provide the advice upon their request. If the member would provide me with the details, I certainly will inquire within the crown law office if indeed that is the case.

**Mr Kennedy:** I'm sure you recognize that in cases like this, where someone is deliberately trying to poison people's view of other people in society, timeliness is an issue. The Metro police hate crimes unit have completed their investigation. We want to congratulate them for expeditiously moving in recognition of this.

Area elected officials are moving to work together to condemn this statement, but you, Attorney General, under section 319 of the Criminal Code, have the unique ability to express the sanction of society. What I'd like to know and what my constituents would like to know is, will you be acting soon either to authorize that charges be laid or, given that you don't have that information, to ensure that you become aware so we can move as quickly as possible with the sanction that is afforded you by that section of the law?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I want to advise the honourable member of the procedure that takes place when a prosecution is to take place under section 319. A recommendation is made to the Attorney General, who reviews the material as a quasi-judicial officer and then makes a determination whether to consent to the prosecution under section 319.

That material has not been delivered from the Metropolitan Toronto Police hate crimes unit. The paperwork that goes with it and the briefing material that has to come to me to be able to review the matter and make that determination, if it is following that course, has not been

delivered to me. I can tell the honourable member that in other cases when the material is provided to me, I take a very detailed and comprehensive approach to reviewing it. I do it within a matter of hours of receiving it. You have my commitment on that.

### NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a question to the Minister of Natural Resources, and the question is regarding one of his recent appointments to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. You've appointed Mr Norman Seabrook to the Niagara Escarpment Commission despite the fact that he has an obvious conflict of interest. Mr Seabrook has an application before the Niagara Escarpment Commission to remove his property in Holland township from the Niagara Escarpment Plan area.

Surely the minister understands that it is completely inappropriate to sit on the commission and at the same time have an application before the commission to remove your property from the Niagara Escarpment Plan area. Minister, were you aware of this conflict of interest before you appointed Mr Seabrook?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I appreciate the member of the third party's question. As she knows, these are nominations to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. They're taken under consideration, they're put forward to a committee and there's a process in this democratically elected House called the public appointments committee. At this committee level they will look to see if there are any conflicts of interest. If her allegation is correct, of course the government will make sure that any conflicts are taken into account before they're appointed.

**Ms Martel:** I say to the minister, what is your responsibility —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order.

**Ms Martel:** Minister, as the person responsible for making the appointment or the nomination, you have a responsibility to ensure a person does not have a conflict of interest. That's your responsibility.

Over and above that, Mr Seabrook is a leading figure in the Grey Association for Democracy and Growth, an organization which has consistently railed against the Niagara Escarpment Commission, its mandate and its operation. In 1995, at the NEC's Leading Edge research conference, Mr Seabrook was publicly highly critical of the commission. In his closing remarks, he recommended, "Terminate the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act."

Minister, don't you think it's time to pull the plug on Mr Seabrook's appointment?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** As I stated before, these are nominations.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I find it kind of ironic that one minute they're talking about rule changes and accusing us of subverting their democratic will. Today they want us to short-circuit the process that's established for public



appointments where members who are democratically elected get a chance to review appointments. They want to do away with that and they call that democracy. They make an allegation and say automatically they're the judge and jury, that that's the way it should happen.

There is a process in this place that respects people's rights. These appointments are nominated in good faith on the best people available for the job. There's a balance that's required and we're pleased with our appointments.

However, if there are conflicts of interest, the government will have to make sure we're satisfied with all the people and that conflicts do not exist before this appointment would become final.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The day has been rearranged so many members can attend the funeral of the late Mr Larry Grossman. To this point in time, the government refuses to tell the opposition what it's going to call for debate this afternoon. I wonder whether this can be ironed out because we wouldn't want the government to hide behind something —

**The Speaker:** Order. That's not a point of order. Clearly, it's something the House leaders would discuss.

1410

#### GROW ONTARIO

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Recently I had the privilege of attending with you Grow Ontario announcements in Leamington for the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Producers Marketing Board. As you know, Leamington has by far the largest area of greenhouses anywhere in Canada. You and I both enjoyed the great taste of their cucumbers and tomatoes while we were there. Can you inform the House what these Grow Ontario projects have meant for the Ontario agrifood industry?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to thank my colleague from Chatham-Kent for that very important question. Yes, I was in the Leamington area with my colleague and I simply want to tell my colleagues in this Legislature of the importance of the agrifood sector.

Ontario's greenhouse production of tomatoes and cucumbers has more than doubled, to \$100 million, from 1994 to 1996. The quality that Ontario producers are putting is very impressive to our American neighbours and most of that production is going to the northern United States. In spite of the fact that the opposition seems to think the agrifood sector is not important, it is the second most important business in Ontario.

**Mr Carroll:** The agrifood producers in my riding and indeed all of southwestern Ontario are happy with your commitment and our government's commitment to their industry. Can you inform the members of what else Ontario is doing to boost exports of our top-notch products?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** I'm pleased to report that in Ontario, \$5.3 billion of agrifood exports were sent to the world last year and this government is committed to

boosting our agrifood exports to the area of some \$10 billion by the turn of the century. As Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, I want to tell my colleagues here that for every \$1 billion of exports, 15,000 new jobs are created in Ontario. That's what this government is doing and we are supporting the agrifood business.

#### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Your announcement on secondary school reform is a major retreat from your original proposals. Those were so poorly thought out and objectionable that the criticism you got was overwhelming and you had no choice but to back down from them.

But part of your announcement last Friday is puzzling because you still talked about removing grade 13 and bringing in a four-year program. In fact, the words of your announcement could have been recycled from a speech made in 1984 by a former Tory Minister of Education, Bette Stephenson, when she did in fact eliminate grade 13 and introduced a credit program. You're keeping exactly the same number of credits and the same number of credit hours as were in place before. I'm wondering exactly where you have shortened the program. Are you going to force students to do their 30 credits in four years by denying them the chance to do any extra credits in areas like art or music or phys ed? Is that how you're going to force them to do this in four years?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** With all due respect, the honourable member knows that's not the case, knows that arts and drama, that some of the physical activities in school will still be there in a four-year secondary school program. Obviously those programs are part of the four-year secondary school programs that are in the other nine provinces and in all 50 states. The only exception has been Ontario.

Yes, we have lagged behind taking up the recommendations of two royal commissions in moving to a four-year secondary school program. The announcements we made last Friday suggest that this government is moving forward very steadily to that four-year program, doing so in concert with educators, with parents and with students, and making sure that our new program meets the needs of our students, not just today but on in the future.

The question that remains is why the member opposite didn't make these changes, didn't answer the royal commissions' suggestion that we go to a four-year program when you were in office. Why did it take this long to bring this reform to our secondary schools? It's a question that remains unanswered by the member opposite.

**Mrs McLeod:** I'm concerned about the unanswered questions by the Minister of Education, who has certainly not implemented the royal commission recommendations on the secondary school curriculum — far from that. He certainly has not, by anything that we know of what he said on Friday, made any changes in terms of the length of time students would be in school based on the number of credits they do or the number of hours they need to do those credits.



We don't know what the Minister of Education is actually planning to do. That's why I'm asking the question. We know that he's delaying his plan, which isn't a plan at all, for two years, and that all he's really done is made another political announcement. He's delaying any changes he might have in mind because he had to go back to the drawing board. He has nothing to go forward with.

I guess one of the things I wish is that he had been held back, for the same reasons, from demanding that his elementary school curriculum be in place for this September, because that was another political announcement that is being rammed through. He's going ahead with his so-called rigorous curriculum in elementary school, but he has no curriculum materials to back it up with.

I wonder if you would tell —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mrs McLeod:** This is the question, Mr Speaker: Would this minister tell the grade 7 students he spoke to on Friday exactly how they are supposed to master his rigorous curriculum?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** For the edification of the member opposite, they were grade 6 students I was talking to last Friday who will be entering grade 7 next year, who will be the first students to take advantage of a curriculum that, in math and languages, is very clear about the expectations we have of students on a year-by-year basis, because students and teachers and parents would like to know very clearly what level of achievement, what level of skill and knowledge is necessary to be successful year by year.

Those are things that were denied the parents and teachers and students by your government when you were in power, and by that government when it was in power. Finally, we have answered that. For that group of students going into grade 7 next year, those expectations will be there, a demanding new curriculum. They will graduate into a secondary school program that's been designed to meet their needs, where most people will go through in four years and have the same graduation standards they now have with OAC.

Again, these are not political statements. What's absent is courage and leadership from the two political parties that ran this province over the last —

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

1420

#### EDUCATION LEGISLATION

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** That cut me to the quick. I have a question for the Minister of Education and Training as well. This government has a penchant for shutting down democracy and shutting out the public. The government rammed through the Fewer School Boards Act with time allocation and then changed the time allocation to remove the opportunity for committee of the whole House consideration, because they said they wanted to get it through as quickly as possible to be in place for January 1.

We have today many people who want to serve their communities, even in the reduced role you're now giving

school trustees, but they can't register as candidates because of your delays in implementing the legislation that you said was so urgent. What is the reason for this kind of rush and then a delay subsequently that means that the people who want to run will not be able to register in time?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for Algoma for the question. I will perhaps have to straighten out his memory a little bit. First of all, the reason Bill 104 did not go to committee of the whole House wasn't because of some particular urgency in getting the bill through that week, by this government; it was because based on the performance in Bill 103, we thought it might be good to get Bill 104 through this Legislature during this century so we could get on with the business of reforming education, so we could get on with the business of lowering the cost of bureaucracy in our school system so we could make reinvestments into the classroom to make a difference with our students. That's why we didn't go to committee of the whole House, just for reference.

If the member for Algoma will think back to that time, during Bill 103, he might see the cause of the delay in bringing forth Bill 104, the cause of the delay to the electoral process across the province, and he might want to answer those people who would like to get about the business of reforming this system as to why he and his colleagues delayed the passage of the bill.

**Mr Wildman:** Since the minister asked me a question, I'll answer him. We delayed 103 because we believe in democracy and public input into the legislative process. What we see happening in the electoral process today at the school board level is a sign of what will happen if your government gets these rule changes through, which will make it possible for you to ram through even more pieces of legislation even more quickly.

Sometimes when you do things in a hurry they are not well prepared, not well-thought-out, and sometimes you make mistakes. That's why scrutiny is so important. Why won't you admit that the Ontario voters deserve to see a government listen, and be prepared to listen rather than simply limit public debate about legislation you want to proceed with?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I think it's not simply a matter of a belief in democracy. I wish the member opposite and his colleagues believed as firmly in the need to reduce the bureaucracy in our education system, in the need to fix the funding system so there are no longer second-class students in Ontario. I know that in the member's own riding this is an important issue for people, that there be a fair funding model, and Bill 104 is part of that building block. It needs to go there to replace a system that produces mediocre student achievement, which is not what students in Ontario are up to, which is not what teachers in Ontario are up to, and so we're building that system piece by piece.

In direct answer to the member's question, right now there are in place local education improvement committees that are working with clerks to make sure that the election process this year will go forward and that the people elected as trustees for these new district school councils will be in place, ready to answer the local community needs.



## TELEMARKETING PRACTICES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Minister, in my riding of Durham East, many constituents have called with a very high degree of concern about the 1-900 employment telephone numbers. As you know, the 1-900 numbers result in a charge back to the caller. What steps are you taking to protect my constituents from these unscrupulous business practices?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** First of all, I think we're all very concerned with respect to any type of fraudulent telemarketing practices. It seems right now the soup du jour is the 1-900 numbers that deal with employment opportunities to the public.

I take the opportunity right now to congratulate my colleague from York-Mackenzie who actually led the charge with respect to employment ads that were being printed. My colleague had taken some steps to go before the CRTC and they had ruled, as a result of his action, that the telephone companies belonging to the centre group of phone companies across Canada, including Bell Canada, can no longer act as a billing and collection agency for companies.

We continually try to get out consumer advisories through the media, and we also use the vehicle of Consumer Beat to make sure the public knows. I can only warn the public that they must read the fine print. The end result of all this is that the consumers, when they call the 1-900 numbers, do get charged for the time they spend.

**Mr O'Toole:** I appreciate this opportunity to educate the public on the use of the 1-900 telephone numbers. Yes, Minister, I'm aware of the hard work of the member for York-Mackenzie, Mr Klees, in defence of all consumers in this province, along with yourself.

Minister, with regard to telemarketing fraud, how successful have your efforts been to date?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I would like to point out again that the initiative in Ontario, and certainly across the country, was started really at the impetus of the OPP, who started an organization called Project Phonebusters. Project Phonebusters is a cooperative effort of not only the Ontario Provincial Police but the RCMP, our ministry, Industry Canada, and certainly we've involved the Canadian Bankers Association and the Canadian Couriers Association, because they are the vehicle quite often that some of these 1-900 scams try to use to confuse and get payment from the consumer.

I think the OPP and certainly Project Phonebusters have had quite a large effect in terms of this type of telemarketing fraud, because it has resulted in about a 40% reduction in this type of fraud in the province since then. Charges are continuing to be laid and certainly the OPP and Project Phonebusters are tremendous organizations which are really leading the charge across the country.

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My question is for the minister of municipalities. Last week, residents

and commercial businesses in the Ottawa-Carleton area received a notice from the Ottawa-Carleton Police Department informing them that they are now —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. I understand. Member for Durham East, I don't think he meant anything derogatory about it, but it is Minister of Municipal Affairs, if we're going to be technical.

**Mr Patten:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs. They were being notified that they were required to pay a fee to have police respond to a burglar alarm. This new user fee could turn into a big cash cow for the police, who are now required to raise their own funds. But they're notifying people that if they don't pay up, the police won't respond to the alarm, whether or not there's a break-in, so this is double taxation.

Everyone knows that you are the one who's responsible, Minister, for this new user fee. Your government opened the door with Bill 26 —

**The Speaker:** Question, please.

**Mr Patten:** — and your massive cuts to public services and downloading everywhere. Can you explain why people of our area are having to pay more than twice for police services?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** To the member of the official opposition, the decision whether to have a user fee for false alarms clearly rests with the municipality. It's not a unique user fee; it's in municipalities right across Ontario. Many municipalities exempt the first three calls and then charge for every one after that, to make sure that there is some responsibility on behalf of homeowners and apartment owners, to make sure there is some control over false alarms. But again the responsibility lies clearly with the municipality. If they choose to put a user fee on that type of service, it's certainly within their prerogative to do so.

**Mr Patten:** The minister doesn't understand. This is a registration fee over and above everything else, before the fact, and if you don't register, you will not be responded to if indeed there is an alarm. This is a proliferation that's going on all across Ontario as a result of the pressure and the loss of services and downloading on to municipalities.

Let me tell you what Aron Spector of Ottawa has had to say. He sent me a letter and he says:

"I am quite perturbed about the need to pay...\$26 for police service that I already pay for in my property taxes, and indirectly, in the taxes I pay to the provincial government...."

"I estimate that in the last two years, new costs to my family...are now approaching 500%" of their provincial tax cuts.

Can you explain to Mr Spector and other residents and businesses in the Ottawa-Carleton area why they should have to pay for police services more than twice, not only through their local property tax, not only through their provincial tax, but now a registration fee on top of that?

**Hon Mr Leach:** It is a local decision. It's up to the local municipalities to determine what services they apply user fees to. Some municipalities have chosen to apply fees for false alarms and for other services, some have chosen to put \$1 a bag on garbage, some have done many other types of user fees. Municipalities are becoming



more cost-effective. There are ways of making the residents of communities pay for the services they receive. This is one of the matters Ottawa has selected to adopt. It's up to the duly elected council of Ottawa-Carleton to do that, and if that's what they've chosen to do, that's certainly not something this government would interfere with.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a question for the Chair of Management Board in the absence of the minister responsible for women's issues. I have a question about this government's habit of shutting down democracy and shutting out the public.

Several months ago your government's plan to cut services for abused women was exposed for what it really is with the unplanned release of your McGuire report. Now we understand that you're about to come out, perhaps tomorrow even, with your plans for services for abused women and their children, which have been written once again behind closed doors and without the benefit of any consultation.

I'm asking you today, Minister, when you release your plans for those services, will you commit to a public consultation process before any implementation?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I am not able to make any announcements here today, but I would say to the member opposite that I will convey her request to the minister responsible for women's issues. I know the minister was here earlier today, but because of the untimely situation we face today, many members have left the House. I will convey the request to the minister responsible.

**Ms Churley:** I understand why many people have had to leave today; I'm certainly not commenting on that. But I do want to say to the minister that it's very important that he convey to the minister and to the Premier as well that there is a funny spin being put on this issue and I don't want to hear that spin tomorrow from the minister.

You've assumed the municipal portion of funding women's shelters. You will recall that's part of your Who Does What plan. At the same time, you try to talk about expansion of services with the automatic increase in your budget that comes from the municipal share. That is double counting, Minister. That is no expansion. We know that your government to date has a history of doing away with equity and gender-based services, so we want to make sure tomorrow that there is not such a spin on it. We don't want to see double counting and we want a promise of public consultation.

**Hon David Johnson:** With regard to public consultation, I can only say that this government has had more public consultation than the previous governments. Last year, in terms of public hearings on the legislation, this government not only had more days, more hours of public consultation than either of the previous two governments, but this government had much of the consultation time right across the province. I'm so delighted that this government has taken the opportunity to travel to Ottawa, to Windsor, to Sault Ste Marie, to

Thunder Bay, to many fine communities across the province to listen to the people of Ontario, to have the people of Ontario assist us in making legislation for this House. In that way, we get better legislation.

I'll assure the member opposite that this government is committed to maintaining that we listen to the people of Ontario and to involving the people of Ontario in all the legislative initiatives that we pass through this House.

#### JOB GROWTH AND TAX REDUCTION ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CROISSANCE DE L'EMPLOI ET LA RÉDUCTION DES IMPÔTS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 129, An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget / Projet de loi 129, Loi visant à stimuler la croissance de l'emploi, à réduire les impôts et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1997.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Immediately following question period will be second reading of Bill 129, according to the order paper, moved by Ms Bassett. It will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1435 to 1440.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Ross, Lillian
Baird, John R.	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Johns, Helen	Shea, Derwyn
Beaubien, Marcel	Johnson, Bert	Sheehan, Frank
Boushy, Dave	Johnson, David	Skarica, Toni
Brown, Jim	Jordan, W. Leo	Smith, Bruce
Carr, Gary	Kells, Morley	Snobelen, John
Carroll, Jack	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Leadston, Gary L.	Stewart, R. Gary
Danford, Harry	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Doyle, Ed	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fisher, Barbara	Mushinski, Marilyn	Villeneuve, Noble
Froese, Tom	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Young, Terence H.
Gilchrist, Steve	Parker, John L.	
Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Miclash, Frank
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Morin, Gilles E.
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	North, Peter
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Patten, Richard
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Pupatello, Sandra
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Ramsay, David
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	Silipo, Tony
Duncan, Dwight	Martin, Tony	Wildman, Bud
Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn	



**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 49; the nays are 26.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed? No. Well, committee of the whole.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I need some direction, I think. Government House leader.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** This is a bill that we're hoping will go through for third reading debate.

**The Speaker:** Let me just explain it quickly: I've asked for third reading. There was a no, therefore I've asked for committee of the whole. It will go to committee of the whole unless you can direct me to send it to one of the committees. Committee of the whole House.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** My remarks today are addressed to all my colleagues in the House, to the media and to the people of Ontario. One of the hazards of being born in a long-standing democracy is that we take it for granted that it will always be with us and that, "It cannot happen here."

Many people are blasé and are cynical about government and politicians. I say to you that the erosion of democracy is happening here in Ontario today with the proposed changes to the rules of the Legislature, and if implemented would make it the most undemocratic Legislature of all, in all of Canada. I am personally alarmed and I am appalled at the same time with the intended changes.

On June 19, 1992, this is what the Honourable Norm Sterling had to say when in opposition: "In our 125-year history the rules...have never been changed without negotiation with the other political parties. Parliament is intended to be a balance between the right of the government to govern and the opposition to oppose. In a majority Parliament, the only tool for the opposition is to seek compromise and to delay."

These current changes will affect everyone. They will enable the government to pass legislation, no matter how significant, within a few days without a reasonable opportunity for the opposition, the media and you the public to react to what is being introduced. If apathy is the enemy of democracy, media and public cynicism are its partners. I urge everyone to speak up.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** The government rule changes work to shut out and shut down any media or public opposition to its right-wing Reform agenda. The rule changes are part and parcel of the Conservative government's ongoing attempts to muzzle opposition members, avoid public scrutiny, and drastically reduce public participation in the democratic process in Ontario.

Consider time frames to respond to discussion papers. Affected groups get documents and have impossible

deadlines for review and reply. Parties must attend quick briefings with many other groups. There's no time left to raise concerns. Parties get 24 hours' notice that a parliamentary assistant is coming to town and they have 15 minutes to meet and express concerns; or, only corporate friends of the government get consulted in advance and other parties have limited or no input after a bill is introduced.

This Conservative government severely restricts public hearings because ministers don't want to hear opposing points of view. There were no hearings on Bill 7, which took labour laws back 50 years. There was only one day of debate in Toronto on changes to public libraries. This government wants to ram through Bill 99, the gutting of workers' compensation, in a process where only 130 out of over 1,300 possible presenters might be heard.

This government's approach is completely undemocratic. The Conservative back bench needs to learn that rule changes won't make this place work any faster. Proceeding with draconian changes in an arbitrary way will only make the label "dictatorship" stick. Since some of your own are already publicly calling it what it is, you can bet your current actions are only going to reinforce that view.

### DR BRIAN GAMBLE

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** Today I'd like to pay tribute to a physician from my riding who has recently been honoured for forwarding the principles of family medicine in a significant manner.

Dr Brian Gamble was one of 15 Ontario doctors to earn a fellowship in family medicine from the College of Family Physicians of Canada and is the first from Kent county to be so honoured.

The college, in naming Dr Gamble to a fellowship, cited him for such achievements as helping fellow physicians with new computer systems at work; his work in primary care reform with the Ontario Medical Association; and the significant work he has done to boost cooperation between the Ontario Medical Association and the college. It is perhaps this latter achievement that most clearly underscores Dr Gamble's dedication to his profession and the respect in which he is held by his peers, his community and those of us who know him well.

I have known and worked closely with Dr Gamble over the years, including the time I served as chairman of the St Joseph's Hospital board. During that time I have come to admire his innate ability and affable willingness to help develop successful solutions to the issues we faced. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge Dr Gamble's wife, Joanne, and his children, whose support and understanding have been most important.

I know all members join me in congratulating Dr Gamble on this honour and wishing him continued success in all his endeavours.

### HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I want to use this opportunity today to plead once again with the



Minister of Health to recognize that the decisions made by the Health Services Restructuring Commission are leaving health care in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario in an increasingly perilous state.

for example, we now know that mental health care has reached a point where a patient, even in severe psychiatric need, must wait six months for an appointment. The reason is that we only have six psychiatrists left in Thunder Bay to provide the service, and the reason they're leaving is the utter state of confusion that restructuring has left us in.

Also, because of the speed with which restructuring is taking place we have a severe shortage of acute care beds, with the patients there being tended by overworked, exhausted staff who often cannot meet the needs of the people for whom they are trained to care.

But the situation becomes even more grim when we learn that the waiting list for long-term care in Thunder Bay has now grown to over 500 people, a list that can only increase with the mandated reduction in our chronic care capacity. Yet in our long-term-care facilities, staff and family members are horrified because your government no longer funds the minimum 2.25 hours of care per day per resident, which at least guaranteed a level of dignity to our elderly and frail population.

Perhaps dignity is what is being lost throughout the system. Minister, in your headlong rush to change the system, you seem to have forgotten about the people who rely on our health care system. Unless you are prepared to step in and view health care from the eyes of those who need the care, your legacy will be that of a minister who, in his haste to renovate the house, somehow destroyed the foundation.

1450

### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** This weekend in Sault Ste Marie people were just beside themselves when I explained to them what this government was attempting to do by way of the rule changes. They're already shell-shocked re the impact of the agenda of this government and the devastation it's having on people and the reckless nature of everything that's going on. To be told that this is going to happen to them even faster and with less input by them is shocking.

However, there are some good things happening. People are taking some leadership in light of the lack of leadership from this government to try to put in place and develop some new strategies, particularly around the question of jobs and jobs for young people. On Saturday I participated with a group of very excited and energized young people under the leadership of the Economic Development Corp. A group called the opportunities for youth task committee put on a workshop at the Water Tower Inn to listen to young people, to listen to other stakeholders in the community, to share and come together around some possible strategies in front of the devastatingly high percentage of people unemployed in our community and across the province, particularly the high percentage of young people who find themselves without any hope, without any opportunity, without any

vision for the future because this government has abandoned any responsibility they have to put in place a strategy that would provide jobs for anybody in Ontario, particularly young people.

### ONTARIO GAMES FOR THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** I would like to inform members of this House about the 1997 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, which will take place in New Liskeard from July 10 to 13.

Approximately 120 of the province's best athletes with physical disabilities will vie for medals. They will display their talents in bocce, golf, power lifting, slalom and track and field.

The Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, launched in 1975, have created many more opportunities for athletes with disabilities to hone their skills and progress to national and international competitions. These games, and the athletes in particular, help enormously to increase public awareness and understanding of persons with physical disabilities.

The games also give athletes the opportunity to display their talents on the provincial stage, strive for personal bests and gain valuable experience that comes from exchanges with fellow athletes at major competitions such as this. Ontario's athletes with disabilities, through dedication and hard work, set a standard of excellence that inspires our youth to participate in sport across Ontario. We are all very proud of them.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of New Liskeard for acting as gracious hosts for this most important event. I believe I speak for all members of this House when I wish the very best of success to every athlete competing at the 1997 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled.

### EDUCATION REFORM

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My statement today is directed to the Minister of Education. I have a press clipping here from the June 20 edition of the Kenora Daily Miner and News. The headline reads "Newspaper Receives Curriculum Before Teachers." Teachers in my riding, and indeed throughout the province, want you to explain why you did not see fit to give them a copy of the new math and language curriculum before it got to the media. It's unusual that the minister would provide this material to the media first and forget about the teachers who have to implement these when they go back to the classroom in September. I think the minister should be ashamed that the teachers had to find out about the policy through the media, which reported on it before the teachers even saw it.

Linda-Beth Marr is the president of the Kenora Women's Teachers' Association, and she certainly indicated to the minister that she was not happy. She indicated this by saying: "We are leaving today without a curriculum in our hands. This is not right, but it is not surprising. Teachers have been excluded from the development of the curriculum as well."



On behalf of Ontario teachers, I call upon the Minister of Education to apologize for ignoring and not including them in the development process of this new curriculum. Ontario teachers want you to explain why you're asking them to implement your policy but refusing to provide time, with the necessary tools in a timely fashion.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Downloading by this government on to regions and then on down to municipalities is going to generate higher and higher property taxes and reduce services for those least capable of paying those higher taxes and those most in need of those services.

The Canadian Automobile Association—Niagara has recently expressed its great concern about the downloading of provincial roads on to the regional municipality of Niagara, kilometre after kilometre after kilometre, which is going to result in the downloading of regional roads on to municipalities. CAA—Niagara — and I tell you, I am in complete accord with them — points out that municipalities will simply not be in a position to build or maintain roads to established Ontario standards.

This is going to create a patchwork quilt approach to roadways across this province and across regions, it's going to directly impact on industry and any industrial growth that might be developed within any part of Ontario and certainly within Niagara, where with an unemployment level of 10.9% and growing, this region has been ill served by this government to date.

CAA points out, and again I join with them, that if the province is adamant about continuing to download responsibility for roads to the municipal tier, it should also be transferring the revenue collected from Ontario motorists to the municipalities. This government, Mike Harris's Tories, has been playing a cruel trick on municipalities and municipal taxpayers across this province, Niagara included.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** After recently hearing remarks made about the health care system in Peterborough, I feel the need to express my thoughts.

Our health care system should be above the political fray. Health care is the only thing common to each and every citizen in Ontario. By politicizing death and illness, we do nothing but hurt everyone involved.

The comments I am referring to involve a situation where patients were found in the hallways of Peterborough Civic Hospital. Unfortunately, patients have been in the halls for many, many years and it is totally unacceptable. However, Ministry of Health officials and hospital staff are taking appropriate measures to rectify this most serious problem.

Operational reviews and restructuring reports have been conducted and the time to act on those reports is now. Patients and all front-line staff deserve the best possible health care available.

Too much finger-pointing by everyone has occurred over the last number of months. I ask all parties involved to work together on this most important issue. Real

cooperation is the best means by which to solve any difficult issue, and our health care situation is no exception.

Our front-line health care workers, from the cleaning staff to the nurses, do an incredible job. The commitment they make to local health care is appreciated by our entire community. Let me personally thank everyone —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

#### ANNUAL REPORT, COMMISSION ON ELECTION FINANCES

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I have an announcement, and then I want to talk about one of the statements. I beg to inform the House that on Friday, June 20, 1997, the 22nd annual report of the Commission on Election Finances, for the year 1996, was tabled.

#### USE OF MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Today the member for High Park-Swansea made a statement with respect to the 1997 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled. I've already cautioned members about this before. The member is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

First off, the front page of the statement said, "Member's statement to the Legislature on the 1997 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, by Derwyn Shea, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation." It's marked "Confidential."

This talked in paragraph two about "Approximately 120 of the province's best athletes with physical disabilities will vie for medals. They will display their talents in bocce," etc. "The Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled, launched in 1975, have created many more opportunities for athletes," and it also announced to the House that the 1997 Ontario Games for the Physically Disabled will take place in New Liskeard from July 10 to 13.

This is not an appropriate announcement for a parliamentary assistant to make. This is an announcement for a minister to make. Then the opposition are allowed an opportunity to respond to these kinds of announcements. 1500

I've mentioned this before, and I want to be very clear to parliamentary assistants. In the future, if you are uncertain, particularly if you're announcing anything to do with the ministry you happen to be parliamentary assistant in, I would ask that you check with the Clerk's table before you make these announcements because now that the announcement has been made, I have no power to allow opposition five minutes to respond.

It's simply a case where the rules are very clear. I would ask parliamentary assistants to check, be careful before you make the announcement if it's in your ministry and in future it would make things a lot easier to handle. Also, ministers, if these announcements are coming out, these are ministerial announcements to be made by ministers during ministerial announcement period and opposition will then get five minutes to respond. Thank you.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In light of your statement, I would ask for



unanimous consent of the House to allow the critics for the ministry to make their five-minute responses to this ministerial statement.

**The Speaker:** The House leader for the third party has asked for unanimous consent for five minutes for opposition parties to respond. Agreed? I heard a no.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In light of the fact that is at least the second time —

**Mr Wildman:** You better learn what the rules are before you try to change them.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs McLeod:** In light of the fact that is at least the second time that you have addressed this very same issue and in light of the fact that it is an issue of serious concern to the opposition because once the opportunity to respond has been missed, it has been missed for the foreseeable future, I wonder if there's a way you have of communicating your decision on this and your caution on this to all the parliamentary assistants who are clearly not here today.

**The Speaker:** The member for Fort William, I just did and I couldn't have been any clearer than I was. Maybe I wasn't clear the first time and that could have been my fault. I think this time I have been abundantly clear and I'm very certain that all parliamentary assistants in the government now are fully cognizant of the rule and that they will pass it on to the members who are as well.

**Mr Wildman:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't know if you're aware, Speaker, but the no that you heard in response to the request for unanimous consent came from the minister. That indicates this was intentional. The minister intended this to happen.

**The Speaker:** No.

**Mr Wildman:** She led the noes.

**The Speaker:** Member for Algoma, I ask you to come to order. There was more than one no, and I will say that I heard a number of noes on the other side.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It deals with a violation of the rules that I think has been committed once again. As we all know, the standing orders of this House are paramount in the way in which we conduct ourselves. Here we are, 15 minutes right after petitions, which may be shorter than that, before we get into orders of the day.

Rule 55 is quite clear. It says, "Before the adjournment of the House on each Thursday during the session, the government House leader shall announce the business for the following week." To the best of my recollection, this has not happened for the last five or six weeks in regard to what exactly would be discussed in this House each week.

I would ask you to take this matter under advisement and to, in effect, hold the government accountable. They have violated the standing order the way it presently exists. I know in the amendments that have been moved forward, they want to change this to "may announce," but in fact they have not announced it. Currently, House rule 55 is very specific: "...the government House leader shall announce the business for the following week." He did

not do this on Thursday evening and he has not done so today, which leaves the opposition, quite frankly, in a very precarious position since we don't know what's going to be called and our various speakers who may wish to speak on the various issues don't know whether to get ready for today's debate or not.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I'm going to rule, unless you want to have input into this particular one.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Actually, would it be appropriate for me to talk on both of the issues, just quickly?

**The Speaker:** I don't know which two there are.

**Hon David Johnson:** The one that you previously ruled on, and we certainly respect your ruling. I think it may be germane —

**The Speaker:** That's gone.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** You didn't respect his ruling or you would have given unanimous consent.

**The Speaker:** Order, the member for Hamilton Centre. You can stand and speak to it during debate, but if you're asking about my ruling or querying my ruling or debating it, it's not on the table.

**Hon David Johnson:** I wasn't going to debate that. I was just going to suggest a course of action as a result. It might be helpful for the three parties to get together and the House leaders to discuss this, because in this case I think the announcement had formerly been made and the information was being conveyed. I think it might be helpful for the three House leaders to get together and —

**The Speaker:** Government House leader, I appreciate the fact that you may have formally announced this etc, but I think it's clear, if you want re-read what I spoke to, it was speaking about the announcement, about the fact that the parliamentary assistant to the minister was making that announcement in the House, talking about that specific announcement.

It really goes beyond when or where or how the announcement was made. It's a practice in this House that we've stood by for a great many years. It's fairly clear that it was completely out of order. If you, as the House leader, want to get together with the other two and work out some arrangement, wonderful. As far as Kingston and The Islands —

**Hon David Johnson:** As far as Kingston and The Islands is concerned, he does —

**Mr Gerretsen:** I assume he's talking about the member.

**Hon David Johnson:** The member, yes. My good friend and colleague the member for Kingston and The Islands raises a point which is fairly specific in the procedures. However, I think we all know in this House that it's a rule that's been observed more in the breach than in the observance.

Certainly the House leaders do get together every Thursday morning and attempt to work out the calendar for the House the subsequent week. Unfortunately, I was out of town last Thursday and indicated to the two House leaders that I would not be able to attend. As a result, and in addition to that, because this is the final week of the session, we think at this point in time, things are a



little bit up in the air. But I have indicated to the other two House leaders that at this point in time our intention is to go back to debate on the standing order changes this afternoon.

I would say that in terms of his point of order, clearly the procedure, the — what's the word I'm looking for? — way this has been dealt with in the past is that this has not been a mandatory requirement for the House leader.

**The Speaker:** I will say — further? Quickly, if that's okay.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** Prompted somewhat by the argument of the government House leader, who has suggested that one of the standing rules of this House is observed more in the breach than in the recognition of that order, it is nevertheless a rule of the House. This argument comes from a minister who is carrying through proposed rule changes which are significantly going to change the orders and the way in which debate is carried out and to limit that debate.

The fact that he is saying that he has already acted to limit the debate by not providing sufficient notice of the orders of the day can hardly be an excuse for not observing them while they are still, even if it's just for the next few hours, in place. I believe that one of the Speaker's obligations — and I think it is borne out in repeated decisions made under any parliamentary rules that are observed — is the obligation of the Speaker to observe the rules of the day, the rules of the House that are in place at this period of time.

There is no question that due notice has to be given of the business to be conducted. It is now some 15 minutes before debate is to resume on the orders of the afternoon. It is only in the last 30 seconds that the government House leader has informed those of us in the opposition what issue we are going to be debating 15 minutes from now. Surely that is not due process and is not in accordance with the rules set out.

**The Speaker:** Let me just say quickly that the rule as read by the member for Kingston and The Islands is read accurately. It says "shall." To be fair to the government House leader, this rule has not been followed to the letter throughout the last number of administrations. It has been allowed to fall by the wayside, with the greatest of respect in this House for all parties.

I understand it's stated in here, but it's very difficult because of practice that has been allowed by previous Speakers not to be lived up to to the letter of the law. Having said that, there also is not a whole bunch in here, as far as repercussions are concerned, that the Speaker can impose other than to direct the government House leader to do it. I would ask the government House leader in future if he would kindly provide the House with the business for the week next week. Beyond that, that is really all I need say on the subject.

1510

## PETITIONS

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** The people of Ontario are getting increasingly furious about the Harris

plan to kill debate in the Legislature. Once again we've been suddenly told we're discussing rule changes again today. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram through legislation more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I'm very pleased to sign my name to this petition.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions signed by members of the London and District Labour Council forwarded to me by Mario Cordeiro, who is the chairperson of the occupational health and safety committee for their labour council. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government's contribution to prevention services made through the WCB has been reduced from \$62 million to \$47 million, with no explanation as to where this money has gone; and

"Whereas the prevention services that the Ministry of Labour once provided are being offloaded to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and other safety associations, thereby increasing the demand for the prevention services provided by the centre; and

"Whereas the government has gutted the certification training standards for health and safety committee members and is replacing them with minimalist performance standards which, in combination with funding cuts, have resulted in a 40% reduction in the staff of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre is facing further cuts of \$2.3 million to finance the estab-



lishment of several new employer safety associations, thereby duplicating administrative costs and services;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the gutting of the funding of prevention services provided by the Workers' Health and Safety Centre.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the moneys taken from the health and safety prevention services of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the other safety associations be returned to them."

On behalf of my NDP caucus colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

### RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I have about 400 names on petitions that continue to be distributed by two farm women living in my riding, Mrs Helen Snowden of Nanticoke and Mrs Marlene Phibbs of Hagersville. The title is "Stand Up for Rural Health Care."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas there is urgent concern about the future of community hospitals located in Dunnville, Hagersville, Simcoe and Tillsonburg; and

"Whereas distance, weather and doctor shortages are serious barriers to people in rural areas accessing emergency services and health care; and

"Whereas local communities have worked for years to establish, maintain, improve and modernize hospital, physician and other health services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt a rural health policy to deal with these problems and to protect the health care rights of rural communities; and that hospital boards, district health councils, and the Health Services Restructuring Commission and the government of Ontario adhere to this rural policy."

I am in agreement with this petition and therefore affix my signature to it.

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Peter North (Elgin):** I have a petition to protect the right to hunt black bear in Ontario. This is to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas the bear population in Ontario is not threatened in any way by wildlife management programs such as the spring bear hunt; and

"Whereas the Ontario black bear population is one of the largest in North America due to effective wildlife management, including hunting; and

"Whereas black bears are just one of the many species of game animals that Ontario residents have the right to hunt during the spring and fall; and

"Whereas the combined total economic impact of bear, moose and deer hunting accounts for more than \$302 million, \$30.1 million of which can be attributed to the bear hunt; and

"Whereas the Ontario Game and Fish Act provides laws which protect the black bear resource; and

"Whereas the rights of Ontario residents who enjoy recreational outdoor activities such as hunting and sport

fishing are being threatened by the misleading campaigns of animal rights activists;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to uphold the fish and game act and protect and preserve the rights therein."

I have affixed my signature to it. Thank you.

### RÉFORME DU RÈGLEMENT

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** J'ai une pétition demandant à Mike Harris de ne pas éliminer les débats à l'Assemblée législative.

«Attendu que la population de l'Ontario veut des discussions rigoureuses sur les projets de loi portant sur les politiques publiques tant que les soins de santé, l'éducation et les soins aux personnes âgées ; et

«Attendu que bon nombre d'Ontariens et d'Ontariennes croient que le gouvernement Harris agit trop vite, trop rapidement, que sa disposition concernant la qualité des soins de santé et la qualité de l'éducation causent des ravages, et qu'elles causent du tort aux personnes âgées ; et

«Attendu que le gouvernement Harris veut maintenant changer le Règlement de l'Assemblée législative pour lui permettre de faire adopter plus rapidement ses projets de loi et moins rendre compte à la population et aux médias par l'intermédiaire d'activités telles que la période des questions ; et

«Attendu que Mike Harris et Ernie Eves, alors qu'ils étaient dans l'opposition, défendaient les droits de l'opposition et qu'ils ont utilisé le Règlement à leur avantage lorsqu'ils croyaient que cela était leur droit de ralentir l'adoption des projets de loi controversés ; et

«Attendu que le gouvernement de Mike Harris désire réduire la période de temps allouée aux députés pour débattre des questions importantes au feuillet ; et

«Attendu que le gouvernement de Mike Harris, par ses changements proposés au Règlement, tente de réduire le rôle des députés élus à l'Assemblée législative qui doivent rendre compte aux personnes qui les ont élus, et que ces changements concentrent les pouvoirs dans les mains des personnes non élues au sein du bureau du premier ministre ;

«Nous, soussignés, demandons à Mike Harris de rejeter ses propositions draconiennes de changements au Règlement et de remettre en vigueur les règles qui encouragent un délai rigoureux sur les questions litigieuses et qui forcent le gouvernement à rendre compte à la population de l'Ontario.»

J'y ajoute ma signature. Merci.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees in the Ottawa area and forwarded to me by their eastern Ontario area office. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Labour has begun a process to fundamentally alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations with the release of the discussion



paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and

"Whereas these changes threaten to deregulate the health and safety protection for workers and reduce or eliminate the rights of workers and joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the ministry intentionally organized meetings in a manner which allowed only marginal opportunity for workers to discuss with the ministry the issues raised in the discussion paper; and

"Whereas workers deserve a full opportunity to be heard regarding the proposals that threaten the legislated provisions that provide them with protection from workplace injury, illness and death;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose the deregulation of workplace health and safety and any erosion of the protection provided workers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that province-wide public hearings be held once any amendments to the act are introduced."

I proudly add my name to theirs.

#### COURT DECISION

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I have a petition signed by over 50 constituents of mine to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas communities strongly disagree with allowing women to go topless in public;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation to require women to wear tops in public places for the protection of our children and public safety in general."

I've signed this so that it can be put to this Assembly.

1520

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This petition, I believe from the Citizens for Local Democracy, reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have petitions signed by hundreds of auto workers from the Canadian Auto Workers union and forwarded to me by their national president, Buzz Hargrove. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas workers' health and safety must be protected in the province of Ontario, especially the right to refuse work which is likely to endanger a worker, the right to know about workplace hazards and the right to participate in joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations help protect workers' health and safety and workers' rights in this area; and

"Whereas the government's discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act threatens workers' health and safety by proposing to deregulate the existing act and regulations to reduce or eliminate workers' health and safety rights and to reduce enforcement of health and safety laws by the Ministry of Labour; and

"Whereas workers must have a full opportunity to be heard about this proposed drastic erosion in their present protections from injuries and occupational diseases;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the present provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations. Further we, the undersigned, demand that public hearings on the discussion paper be held in at least 20 communities throughout Ontario."

I wish they were doing that with the WCB as they'd promised, and I add my name to theirs.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I probably have one of the most important petitions we've heard here over the last two years. It's addressed to the Harris Reform government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature.

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris Reform government is moving too quickly

and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris Reform government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas both Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris Reform government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris Reform government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I have affixed my signature to it as I'm in full agreement with this petition.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I have a petition signed by literally hundreds, close to 1,000, people from the community of Timmins. It deals with the whole question of cuts to the long-term-care system, specifically homes for the aged. It reads:

"Sick people are not asking to be sick. People at nursing homes are in need of special care. There are many disadvantages with the cuts of nursing staff that will be made in the future. The disabled people will end up suffering more because they will not be getting the care they should have. Lack of proper care could lead to depression in some patients.

"At this moment, nurses have difficulty to keep up with their duties because there are so many sick patients in nursing homes. With the proposed cuts, the nurses who will be left working will get exhausted from rushing too much, which could lead to accidents."

It goes on to state their opposition to the cuts by the government to the long-term-care system, and I affix my signature to that petition.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for adoption of amendments to the standing orders.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Speaker: As many members will know, the member for Cochrane North had the floor when we last debated this motion. Over the weekend he had a medical emergency. I understand he is in the hospital this afternoon and will not be able to be present to continue his remarks. I would ask unanimous consent of the House that the member for Cochrane North be able to resume his remarks when he returns to the Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Do we have unanimous consent to allow the member for Cochrane North to resume his remarks when he gets back to the assembly? Agreed.

Further debate? The member for — the minister —

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** The member for Mississauga West. Maybe you'll have a chance to get that right one of these days.

**The Speaker:** Sorry.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** I have some amendments to move on the standing orders that are before us.

I move that the motion to amend the standing orders be amended as follows:

That the proposed clause 9(c) be amended by adding, immediately following the first sentence, the sentence "Such a motion requires notice, and must appear on the Orders and Notices paper by the first sessional day of the first week to which the motion applies."

That the proposed clause 9(c) be further amended by adding immediately following the words "according to the terms of the motion" in the sixth line, the words "but no government bill shall be called on more than one sessional day during a single calendar day without unanimous consent."

That the proposed clause 16(b) be struck out.

That the proposed clause 25(a) be amended by striking out the words "but only during the first five hours of debate."

That the proposed clause 28(h) be deleted and the following substituted:

"(h) Except where a standing order or other order fixes the time of the vote, a vote may be deferred at the request of any chief whip of a recognized party in the House. The Speaker shall then defer the taking of the vote to the next sessional day during the routine proceeding 'Deferred votes' at which time the bells shall be rung for five minutes."

That the number "45" in the first line of proposed clause 36(h) be replaced with the number "24".

That the entire amendment to standing order 38 be struck out and the following substituted:

"That standing order 38 be amended by the addition of the following clause: '(g) No introduction of a single bill shall last more than five minutes.'"

That the time "5:45" in the first line of proposed clause 42(g) be replaced with the time "6."

That the number "15" in the third line of proposed clause 42(g) be replaced with the number "5."

That the time "5:45" in the second line of proposed clause 43(b) be replaced with the time "6."

That the time "5:45" in the first line of proposed clause 46(b) be replaced with the time "6."



That the number "15" in the fourth line of proposed clause 46(b) be replaced with the number "5."

That the following clause be added immediately following the proposed clause 46(c):

"(d) A time allocation motion may not be moved on the same calendar day that any of the bills that are subject of the motion have been called as a government order."

That the number "three" in the first line of clause proposed to be added to standing order 57 be replaced with the number "four."

That the number "45" in the first line of proposed clause 97(d) be replaced with the number "24."

That the number "four" in proposed clause 97(g) be replaced with the number "10."

That the words "take effect on the first day after August 1, 1997" in the fourth last paragraph of the motion be replaced with the words "take effect on the third sessional day after August 1, 1997."

That the date "June 12, 1997" in the second line of the second last paragraph of the motion be replaced with the date "June 23, 1997."

1530

**The Speaker:** Mr Sampson moves that the motion to amend the standing orders be amended as follows:

That the proposed clause 9(c) be amended by adding, immediately following the first sentence, the sentence "Such a motion requires notice, and must appear on the Orders and Notices paper by the first sessional day of the first week to which the motion applies."

That the proposed clause 9(c) be further amended by adding, immediately following the words "according to the terms of the motion" in the sixth line, the words "but no government bill shall be called on more than one sessional day during a single calendar day without unanimous consent."

That the proposed clause 16(b) be struck out.

That the proposed clause 25(a) be amended by striking out the words "but only during the first five hours of debate."

That the proposed clause 28(h) be deleted and the following substituted:

"(h) Except where a standing order or other order fixes the time of the vote, a vote may be deferred at the request of any chief whip of a recognized party in the House. The Speaker shall then defer the taking of the vote to the next sessional day during the routine proceedings 'Deferred Votes' at which time the bells shall be rung for five minutes."

That the number "45" in the first line of the proposed clause 36(h) be replaced with the number "24."

That the entire amendment to standing order 38 be struck out and the following substituted:

"That standing order 38 be amended by the addition of the following clause:

"(g) No introduction of a single bill shall last more than five minutes."

That the time "5:45" in the first line of proposed clause 42(g) be replaced with the time "6."

That the number "15" in the third line of proposed clause 42(g) be replaced with the number "5."

That the time "5:45" in the second line of proposed clause 43(b) be replaced with the time "6."

That the time "5:45" in the first line of proposed clause 46(b) be replaced with the time "6."

That the number "15" in the fourth line of proposed clause 46(b) be replaced with the number "5."

That the following clause be added immediately following the proposed clause 46(c):

"(d) A time allocation motion may not be moved on the same calendar day that any of the bills that are the subject of the motion have been called as a government order."

That the number "three" in the first line of clause proposed to be added to standing order 57 be replaced with the number "four."

That the number "45" in the first line of proposed clause 97(d) be replaced with the number "24."

That the number "four" in proposed clause 97(g) be replaced with the number "10."

That the words "take effect on the first day after August 1, 1997" in the fourth last paragraph of the motion be replaced with the words "take effect on the third sessional day after August 1, 1997."

That the date "June 12, 1997" in the second line of the second last paragraph of the motion be replaced with the date "June 23, 1997."

Further debate?

**Hon Mr Sampson:** In moving these amendments, I want to make it clear up front that these amendments are a result of what I believe are continuing and fruitful discussions that have occurred between House leaders in this House, who have tried, as we have suggested, to provide their input to us on how we can better the motion ahead of us.

I also understand, and you can probably guess from the comments still coming from the other side of the House, that the House leaders have not yet quite reached an agreement on the full context and the full breadth of this motion before us. But I think it's important to understand that discussions have taken place, although I have not been at those meetings, and that these discussions, I believe, have resulted in amendments that are changes to the standing orders changes that were brought forward to this House last week.

Let me speak briefly to what these amendments will mean and how they change the motion before us. Firstly, notice will be required now, under these amendments, for all evening sittings. This notice will be such that it has to be tabled before the week of the extended sittings. I think that's a significant amendment, to have changed the existing motion, which of course did not have the requirement for the motion. We have now said that there should be an appropriate notice period and have set that notice period.

Secondly — and even today we've heard some comments from the other side of the House in question period and in the petitions as I sat and listened carefully to them — no government bill will be called more than once on the same calendar day. I think there were at least two petitions brought forward to this House today saying that there is some concern about the same bill being called on the same calendar day. We've listened and we've changed that proposed standing order amendment with this particular amendment, which says that no govern-



ment bill can be called more than once on the same calendar day.

I must say, in looking at the rule that will allow us to extend sittings in the House into the evening hours, there is some concern from the members on the back benches I have talked to, frankly on both sides of the House, that private bills being brought into this House do indeed get the hearing at first reading, private members' hour does allow the chance for the House to debate a particular private member's bill on second reading, but there doesn't seem to be a time, especially where there's a government with a very busy government agenda, for the House to appropriately address private bills that are brought forward by members who are trying to represent a particular interest they hold in their community or as it relates to this House in general. There doesn't appear to be a time that's appropriately allocated for private members' bills to be dealt with in the third and final reading stage.

I am hopeful that our proposal to extend the sittings of this House into the evening hours will allow for the scheduling of the third reading hearing and perhaps passage of the very important private members' bills that I think are a very key part of what happens in this House.

I am a relatively new member in this House and over the two years I've been here it has become quite apparent that private members' business is one of the very important areas for private members to deal with the issues they find important. I would welcome any changes in the standing orders that would accommodate those issues being brought forward and dealt with as expeditiously as possible.

As it relates to the amendment for no government bills being called more than once in the same calendar day, I think it's important — and one has to sit down and work back the number of days that are available for the passage of a government bill — that this particular amendment I have put forward today will ensure that bills will not be passed any sooner than is the case today under the current rules that are governing the operation of this House. I believe that responds to the concerns that have been raised by members opposite in regard to the timely enactment of government bills.

1540

The amendments I have brought forward and tabled today will also reinstate what we've called around here the 10-minute hits, the member responses, following five hours of debate. The earlier amendments to the standing orders had taken that away after five hours; we're reinstating that.

Division on the introduction of first reading will be reinstated. Our amendments that had been tabled earlier did not allow for that. That of course now is the case; we've reinstated that.

Divisions relating to the want of confidence motions, opposition days and time allocation motions shall be moved from 5:45 to 6 o'clock.

A time allocation motion may not be moved on the same calendar day that any bills that are the subject of the motion have been debated. Of course this relates to the point I raised a few minutes ago. It will mean, as it relates to the time that could elapse between the introduc-

tion of a bill and the passage of the bill, the rules that we have, as amended and brought forward today, will not change or shorten that particular period of time.

Government responses to order paper questions and petitions will be much quicker than is the case federally. Response to petitions will be made from 45 days to 24 days, which is a lot quicker than the current situation in the federal House. Responses to order paper questions will be reduced from 45 days to 24 days. That effectively means that within 24 days, ministers and ministries will be required to respond to order paper questions. As it relates to order paper questions, members will be able to table 10 of these at any one time, as opposed to the four which we had suggested earlier.

In closing, and I think it's appropriate to do so to pass the debate time to the opposition to deal with these amendments, I still believe that these amendments, inclusive of the ones I've brought forward today, strike a good balance between the rights of members to participate in a free and open and thorough debate on the issues and the legislation that face this House and the authority and the responsibility that's given government to deal with the issues in a timely manner.

I don't have the history to speak to in this House that some of the other members do, which I suppose is a point of frustration in many cases for both sides of the House, but I think it's important that members have their chance to debate thoroughly in this House issues that come before this House, whether they be private members' issues or government issues. I think it's important also for the government to be able to deal with the responsibility of governing in a timely manner, which means the ability to be able to move forward on legislation that in many cases is controversial and in many cases has fair representations on both sides of the issues but where debate and the procedures of this House shouldn't delay, I would say, the responsibility of government to be able to move forward on the agenda on which it has been elected to do so.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate. The member for St Catharines.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, although I'm not thanking you for the opportunity to speak on this, because it should not be before the House this afternoon.

Once again, the government has chosen a rather strange day to be dealing with this. Members of this House and the public will remember that the first time we heard anything about this was of course the situation where we were in a federal election. On the day of a federal election we had the government coming in through the auspices of the member for Nepean with changes that would be made in terms of the rules that govern the Ontario Legislature.

I was very concerned at that time that the government was trying to hide its real intentions, that it was specifically choosing a day that was not a day when there would be a lot of attention given to this issue, and when the government did so, that it must have been ashamed of what it was doing. It had a good reason to be ashamed, because what it's trying to do is change the rules of this House so the government can bulldoze its controversial



and radical legislation through very quickly, with a minimum of public scrutiny and with a minimum of question periods and accountability to go with it. The public should know, make no mistake about it, that's the intention of this government. The tinkering with the original proposals really changes very little in regard to the intent of the government.

The first day they brought it in, the federal election was on. They had a press conference in the morning, when they knew nobody would be watching. As I've said on many occasions, you can judge a government best by what it does when it thinks nobody is watching it, and it thought nobody was watching. Then, when it actually introduced these for debate into the House, it was late on a Thursday afternoon, the last afternoon that the House sits. It was about five minutes to 5 that they dropped the bombshell on the table in front of us, the bombshell being the actual rule changes that they were going to try to implement.

Then today we have an event on which is a sad event, and that is the funeral of Larry Grossman, a beloved member of this Legislature and one who was a friend to many of us. Interestingly enough, when there's a lot of interest concentrated on that event, as there should be, paying tribute to Mr Grossman for his many years of service, lo and behold, the government decides it's going to drop this this afternoon.

I mentioned this to one of the more moderate government members and he said — and I won't identify the person because I don't want to embarrass him — “No, we wouldn't do this.” That member, who knows who he is when I was talking to him, should be watching the television set. That's exactly what they did. They dropped again this issue of rule changes on an afternoon when people justifiably, in my view, are thinking of something else, and that is a tribute and a send-off, if you will, to our good friend Larry Grossman, who tragically passed away just a couple of days ago.

What this is all about is making the trains run on time. There are some members of the government who have not served in this place before who do not like the pace at which it moves. This is not unique to this government. I'm sure with all governments, when the members are newly elected, they ask the other members why the opposition takes more time than they believe is necessary to deal with legislation. They do so because that's how you alert the public to the issues of the day: by taking the necessary time.

I remember a phoney letter which was sent to the leader of the official opposition in which one member tried to say, “The members of the opposition don't want to work all these days.” What I'm saying to the members of the government is, if you wish to sit more days of the year, we're happy to sit more days of the year. In fact, this government has decided it would sit almost continuously since January 13, with a couple of breaks, through to the end of June. That's fine with me, that's fine with the opposition. Why is that fine? Because the government can deal with its legislation, but every day that it deals with legislation — in other words, every day that counts for a day in the legislative calendar — has with it a question period, and that's the accountability that goes with it.

It's obvious that the people in the Premier's office don't like that. They don't want the accountability. The Cadillac is getting scratched as it drives by. They want the Cadillac to zip by unscathed, without the necessary analysis, detailed in many cases, and criticism.

Ultimately, if the government wins in the court of public opinion, that's what we all accept as elected representatives. But what this government wants to do, through the people in the back rooms of the Premier's office, is shove through its legislative agenda just as quickly as possible and with as little accountability as possible. Virtually all of these rule changes are geared to do that. People who know the rules of this House, people who have observed it in years gone by, not just members, look at these rule changes and tell you that's exactly what it's all about. When you want to reduce the amount of time that members have to speak on legislation, on bills, that's exactly what you're doing, because very often the bills are detailed, very often they must be taken in context with other legislative action that the government is undertaking. In this case, of course, the government wants to rush that through in a minimum amount of time.

1550

It also doesn't want to give information out in a timely fashion, so it sets some ridiculously long period of time for replying to what we call order paper questions from any member of the House who is not a member of the cabinet. But most particularly the opposition uses the order paper questions to obtain specific information, legitimate information that should be available to anyone in the public. What does this government do? It wants to limit the number of questions an individual can place on the order paper and to increase the number of days in which a reply must be forthcoming. If you think that's democratic, it is not.

What the government has done this afternoon is said, “You didn't like the arsenic, so here is some hemlock to drink,” because that's what it's all about. This is tinkering. Is it better than what existed before? Some might say it is, but it is certainly far from what I consider to be an important opportunity for analysis and debate in this House. Even the government and certainly the people of this province benefit by this additional debate and discussion.

There are times when the government must be stopped in its tracks, even momentarily, to reassess its position, to reconsider its position. But no, the backroom boys in the Premier's office are not satisfied with that. They want to shove everything through and forget about what anybody else has to say. They want to have their own members up, clapping for the government legislation, spinning the government line, when I believe the most important things that are said by government members are within the confines of the government caucus room where they can tell them what they really think instead of simply reading the speeches that their backroom boys provide for government members to read.

I think Ernie Eves was right. I asked a question of him the other day, and it wasn't very confrontational, because I have a lot of respect for him as a parliamentarian and as a person knowledgeable of the rules of this House. This is what Ernie Eves had to say on June 22, 1992,



when a previous government was proposing rule changes for the House. I think these words are particularly important and should be considered by all government members:

"I think one has to understand that the only way opposition — not just opposition members but any public opposition to any proposed piece of legislation — can be effectively dealt with or talked about under our system of government, under the parliamentary system of government, is through the opposition parties' ability to debate, and yes, on occasion even stall or slow down progress of a particular bill, and that has worked very effectively over the years against governments of all political stripes."

That's Ernie Eves saying that — I'm not saying that — and he was absolutely right. He made some excellent speeches about this very matter when he was in opposition. I agreed with him then and I agree with him now.

Norm Sterling is again a long-serving member, elected June 9, 1977, and on June 22, the letter that Norm Sterling wrote to the Ottawa Sun was read into the Hansard by Ernie Eves. Let me quote what Norm Sterling, the member for Carleton, now the Minister of Environment and Energy, had to say:

"Over the past six years in opposition I have been successful in forcing the government of the day to accept some amendments to their legislation. My only tool was to delay or threaten to delay. What sense is there for me to bother to debate if I have no means to make them listen?"

That's exactly what these rule changes are doing. They're taking away the means the opposition has to make the government listen. Things will proceed very quickly. If you're running an insurance business and you simply snap your fingers and something is done, that's the way it's done in business. I'm not here to pass judgement on that, because a business operates differently from a government. That is not to say that governments from time to time should not use good business practices; they should. But governments, in the processing of legislation through a Legislature, should not work the way a business does, because we are doing the business of all the public.

The ramifications of the changes that you are bringing forward — and you're bringing them rapidly and recklessly and certainly drastically — are very substantial for this province. That's why it's important that we take our time and deal effectively and comprehensively and exhaustively with the legislation and that the opposition have within its tool chest — the Minister of Education likes making references to tool chests — the tools to slow down the process, and on rare occasions, to halt the process momentarily so that the government can reconsider its position.

The best example of this was Bill 26, the massive budget bill, the omnibus bill as it was referred to, that dealt with some 47 different pieces of legislation, that established a hospital closing commission called the Health Services Restructuring Commission of Ontario, that is now going around the province ordering the closing of hospitals in all our communities.

Does that mean members of this Legislature have any input in that process any more? No, because that bill contained a provision that gave all that power to the hospital restructuring commission. It seems to me that we are elected as members to make those decisions. Sometimes they're difficult, sometimes they're not easy, but surely the democratically elected people, those that the public can get at, should have that kind of decision-making input.

Bill 26 in effect concentrated all kinds of power, tremendous power, into the hands of unelected individuals, whether the senior civil service or the political advisers to the Premier or a few select cabinet ministers. That power was taken away from everybody else in this province, particularly the elected members of this Legislature, and placed in the hands of a few. That is not healthy for democracy and in fact that is not good government.

It has been said in the past of some people who have been notorious in history, "Well, at least the trains ran on time." Surely there are more important things than making the trains run on time and, of course, I'm saying that in a symbolic sense as opposed to a literal sense. There are things that are important, and when the government was slowed down, when the government was stopped momentarily in its tracks on Bill 26 — much to the chagrin of the mad dogs out there who could not understand why anybody would have this power — once that bill was stopped, the government had a chance to reconsider. It held hearings right across the province of Ontario, not a few show hearings just before Christmas at 11 o'clock at night, but rather hearings in various communities, including the Niagara Peninsula, where the public could have input into that legislation. As a result, the government itself amended the bill with I think in excess of 150 different amendments. That was an important process.

Then the government decided on Bill 103, the megacity bill, that it would simply thumb its nose at the people of Metropolitan Toronto who had voted in the local plebiscites some 76% overall against the plan for a megacity. This government particularly said it was interested in the results of a referendum or a plebiscite, the voice of the people. In fact they ignored that completely and rammed through the legislation. The opposition slowed that down for a number of days, and there was a lot of consideration, a lot of discussion about that particular bill, and we could really see the ramifications.

We would have preferred, by the way, to have had more time to actually debate that legislation, but when you keep rewriting the rules to limit debate, as you are in this case once again rewriting the rules to limit debate, then oppositions, now and in the future, will have to find extraordinary parliamentary manoeuvres to get around the government ability to shove its legislation through quickly. The changes proposed in the government's own motion are minor changes. If you wanted to say one was arsenic and one was hemlock, that would probably be a good description. Both are poison for the parliamentary system, and this is most unfortunate.

I think some members of the Conservative caucus must be embarrassed by this whole exercise. I understand the



government selecting one or two ways that it might want to prevent a future ability of an opposition to stop it in its tracks. I understand that. I don't agree, because it takes away any of the so-called bargaining chips that the opposition would have to enable more debate to take place on legislation or motions. Nevertheless, I would understand that. But this government has gone full bore ahead to trample the opposition.

1600

That's why the other day the members of the Liberal caucus, led by Dalton McGuinty, the leader, after he directed a question to the Premier on rule changes — which the Premier refused to answer, by the way; fobbed it off to the House leader — walked over and the leader of the official opposition, Dalton McGuinty, placed his procedural rule book of this House on the Premier's desk and members of the Liberal caucus placed their rule books symbolically in front of the Premier's desk to demonstrate that all power would reside within the Office of the Premier and the rest of us might as well go home. That's what this is all about.

I know people will say, and I take them at their word, that in future we will look at rule changes, but I'm going to tell you it's so easy to accept the rule changes that are there by the previous government and not make significant changes, because this gives the hammer to whatever government is in power.

The government has 82 seats. It has all kinds of money it can spend on public relations, and indeed does spend. The public of this province will know that the government spent millions upon millions of dollars on television advertising with the Premier in it, trying to sell the government message — not Progressive Conservative Party money; government money on blatant advertising, and the government will continue to do that.

The government has, as I mentioned, 82 members and can win any vote in this House or any committee of this House. The government has what are called time allocation motions and closure motions which can eventually close off the debate. So it's not as though the government is without its resources to be able to push its agenda through.

Is that good? It's not good for the opposition, but this isn't about the opposition; this is about whether it's good for the people at large in the province, and also, I might add, the government. I think governments work better when they're called to account. I think governments work better when they're forced to slow down and do things right instead of doing them quickly. I know the revolutionaries, the zealots and the radicals in the party and in the Premier's office and those within the caucus who are eager to ingratiate themselves to the Premier are going to want to move the agenda more quickly.

Here we are two years into the government and the government has already passed several regulatory changes and legislative changes, probably more than other governments in the same period of time. That's not good enough for the zealots; that's not good enough for the backroom boys in the Premier's office. They're not satisfied because they don't like the fact that they're getting some criticism along the way. Because the opposition has had the tools to slow the government down when necessary,

the government gets some criticism it might not otherwise get.

Let me tell you what the night sitting is all about. John Baird will try to tell you, speaking on behalf of somebody in the Premier's office, that this has something to do with working: "Doesn't everybody have to work at night?" as though members don't. There isn't a member of this House who in all honesty doesn't know that there's far more to our responsibilities, to our job, than sitting in the House itself. If the government is so eager to have more time to debate, then the government should sit more days of the year. What they're going to get is two legislative days with one question period. That's less accountability.

The other changes we see in there are designed to push the question period, which is the focus of accountability and the focus of attention in this House, back further and further, from third place to seventh place, so that if on any other matters that are placed before question period there is any time taken, question period is pushed further and further back in the afternoon. At 4 pm, under the rules that were written, the government business would start even if question period had not been completed.

The government tries to characterize what went on as negotiations. What the government did was load a gun — I don't know what kind, a .45 or whatever it is — put the six bullets in and put the gun at the head of the House leader of the NDP and the House leader of the Liberals and say, "Either you accept this or something close to it, or we're going to ram through the original." What the government really wants is a bargain. They want to be able to make changes and then say, "The opposition agreed to these." That's hardly going to happen unless the government confines its changes to something far less than what we saw originally and what was snuck in again this afternoon behind other news events of a tragic nature. That's what the government is up to.

It was just interesting, and I go back to the point of a government member for whom I've always had a good deal of respect: When I said to him, "They're going to ram the rule changes in this afternoon," he said to me, "Dave Johnson wouldn't do that." I said: "Dave Johnson is not going to do that. Mike Harris is going to do it. Dave Johnson will simply be the messenger." That's what happened this afternoon.

If you think there isn't anything these people on the other side will do — not all of them, because in fairness I know some of them and I'm sure they're not enthusiastic about what's happening this afternoon in the House or previously. But many, particularly those in the Premier's office, are going to be eager, and they think they're being clever. They'll say:

"Wasn't that clever? The day of the federal election we had this press conference and announced these proposed rule changes. Wasn't that sly when on Thursday afternoon, when nobody was around at five to 5, we made the changes come into effect by placing them on the order paper? Isn't it clever that today, when many members are away at another event and there's much attention diverted to another event, we'll drop the rule change changes in this afternoon?"



I look back at Thursday. Didn't we pass three bills last Thursday? I think we did. We were going to pass third reading of one of those bills, Bill 129, for instance, this afternoon quite easily, probably with no debate, and get into some other bills. But you have to know the government isn't interested in those negotiations. It's interested in shoving its rule changes through. I contend to you that if the opposition agreed to pass everything on the order paper that the government has indicated it would like to pass this session, that wouldn't be enough. What they really want is not all these bills, not all this legislation, but they want to be able to gut the rules of this House so they can simply grease the skids to ram everything through that this government considers desirable.

Make no mistake about it; they're going to do some of this in the summer. That's why we're debating this today, because in August there's going to be more controversial legislation and the government doesn't want extensive debate on that. The government doesn't want the ability of the opposition to stop the government in its tracks even momentarily in a rare, extraordinary gesture. So the government has made all these changes, and the Pabulum which was served up this afternoon does not solve the problem, not by any means.

Even in the St Catharines Standard on the weekend — and we have a lot of other things to worry about — there was an editorial. I don't have a copy of that editorial — I wish I did — to read right now from the Saturday St Catharines Standard. My good friend the member for St Catharines-Brock has the Saturday Standard. I think he's sending it over with a page; I don't know.

I saw, by the way, an advertisement; the member for St Catharines-Brock had a full-page ad on a prominent page in the Standard, extolling the virtues of the government. Was that it, Tom? I just glanced at that. There was a full-page ad in the St Catharines Standard.

There was an editorial which was very good. It was an editorial that pointed out that it is important to have a democratic debate even if it takes a little longer.

What you have to understand is that these rule changes will bring about an ugly mood in this House. If they are implemented — and we've tried to be reasonable until such time as they might be implemented — if you think you're going to get the opposition saying yes to unanimous consents, you're wrong; if you think you're going to get the opposition to cooperate when the government makes a mistake inadvertently, you're wrong.

That's how the House has to work. That's most unfortunate, because as Ernie Eves once noted, the House works at its very best when the three House leaders are able to get together and come to an agreement on when and how legislation shall pass in the House. When you have an ugly mood in the House because the government has put the boots to the opposition, then you find out that it's not easier for the government. You find out that the government is in some very difficult circumstances and that's because it brings them upon itself.

1610

You on the other side will always get your way, and you're going to ensure that there's something the public doesn't know about this change as well, and that is, it's retroactive. In other words, all of the legislation and

motions and so on that the government has on already, it's going to pass this retroactively to affect those.

The member for Scarborough East, one of the zealots over there, one of the people always happy to ingratiate himself with the Premier, is a person who would say: "Aren't we clever? We're going to make that retroactive. Isn't that clever?" I suspect that some of his colleagues who have been around here for a while, who have served on a municipal council, will say: "I don't think that's so clever. I don't really think that's clever." Some of the people who have dealt with retroactive legislation and have been very, very cautious about it would say, "I don't think it's a good idea to pass motions which are retroactive." That's always considered by thoughtful parliamentarians to be not a wise course of action. But of course the zealots, the radicals, the new breed want it through quickly and the heck with everything else.

The government will have a victory ultimately on this because it can't lose, because it has 82 members. It will be a pyrrhic victory ultimately because some of the legislation that's going to go through will have mistakes in it. Because the government didn't take additional time, because it didn't take into account additional input, then the government is going to make mistakes, and ultimately the people of this province will pay the price for those mistakes.

There is no more important legislative initiative that has come before this Parliament in two years than this motion — none at all. There are individual bills which have been controversial and have had consequences for the province, I understand that, and they are individually important, but this is the most important legislative initiative because it opens the door wide to the government being able to push everything through quickly and with a minimum of debate.

I've looked at these rule changes as they are proposed, looked at them carefully, and I've tried to look at some other conclusion. I've tried to say, "Is there somebody over there trying to be fair, trying to make the system work better?" No. They're trying to make the system work more efficiently for the government, not fairer for members of the House and not better for the people of this province.

I've often said as well that you can judge a government not only, as I said previously, by what it does when it thinks no one is listening but also by what it doesn't do when it has the power to do so. With the massive majority that the government has obtained, it does have the power to implement whatever it pleases. To use that power with prudence, with discretion, with thoughtfulness is what is important for a government, and that is not what is happening today. They are using it because it is expedient to use it, and they are using both boots to kick the opposition with this particular motion.

The amendments, as I say, make some minor changes, so the rules are not as radical in their changes, not as draconian, as we like saying in this House, but they are nevertheless very, very strongly tilted towards the government.

It is clear that Mike Harris, it is clear that Mike Harris's advisers and it is clear that some people on the government benches are not satisfied with the democratic



system, are not satisfied with the rules under which they were elected. I recall the Premier not saying during the election campaign that he would change any rules of this House, that he would tamper with the democratic procedure. Yet we see this afternoon once again, hiding behind another event, this government tampering with that democratic procedure with the goal of being able to trample the opposition, whether it be in this House or outside of this House.

**Mr Wildman:** I rise to participate in this debate this afternoon with some considerable regret. This is a delicate matter, but I want to review briefly in my opening remarks what has happened here today.

The legislative session began today with question period beginning immediately at 1:30 because many members on all sides of the House wanted the opportunity to attend the funeral of Larry Grossman, a former leader of the Conservative Party for whom most of us, if not all — I think all of us — have had tremendous respect and regret his passing, particularly at such a young age. In order to facilitate the ability of many members of the executive council to be here both for question period and to attend that funeral, the government House leader requested that the other two House leaders agree to unanimous consent to change the orders of proceedings here so that we could begin immediately at 1:30 with question period. We readily agreed.

Both the Liberal House leader and myself also intended to attend that funeral because we wanted to pay our last respects to Mr Grossman and to express our condolences to his family. However, even though we had agreed to unanimous consent to change the time of question period, the government House leader did not have the courtesy to inform the two opposition House leaders about what was going to be debated this afternoon. So both of us are here now because we had to be here to be able to deal with whatever the government decided to call for debate, and that meant we could not make it to the funeral.

During this process too, we had members' statements subsequent to question period because of the agreed change of order. I think during those members' statements we had an incident which indicated the lack of respect that members of this government have for this place and for the rules that govern this place currently. They like to accuse the opposition of having a lack of respect for the rules.

The Speaker called the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation to order because she had her parliamentary assistant read what essentially was a ministerial statement, and as the Speaker indicated, that was inappropriate and this was not the first time he had ruled on this matter. The Speaker had indicated previously that parliamentary assistants must not make what are essentially ministerial statements in this House. The reason is that if the minister makes a statement, then the opposition critics, according to the current rules, have the opportunity to make five-minute statements in response. However, if another member makes a statement rather than the minister, that is not afforded to the opposition critics, and the Speaker called him to order.

If it had been an inadvertent transgression of the rules, then you'd think the government would want to make it right. So after the Speaker made his ruling, I got up and asked for unanimous consent, keeping in mind that we had agreed to unanimous consent earlier, to allow the opposition critics to make their responses to this statement that had been made by the parliamentary assistant. What happened? A number of members of the party supporting the government said no, but what was most significant was the fact that the minister herself led in that chorus of noes and, in my view, in doing so, demonstrated a complete lack of respect for the Speaker, for the assembly and for the process. I think that's what this is about.

1620

The member for Mississauga West then, after the order was called, got up and moved an amendment — no warning for the opposition, no notice, nothing. He had the gall to introduce that amendment as the result of conversations among the three House leaders. The member was attempting to give the impression that these proposed amendments to the amendments to the standing orders were agreed to by the three House leaders. How can one put up with that kind of subterfuge in this place?

I resent personally the fact that I was not able, as a result of the shenanigans and the machinations of this government, to attend the funeral of a friend of mine. I won't prolong that.

But this again is part of the whole strategy this government has followed with regard to rule changes. Initially the government proposed rule changes, but they didn't do it with the minister, the government House leader, getting up in this place and saying, "We want to have rule changes," or coming to a House leaders' meeting and talking to the other two House leaders and saying, "We'd like to have rule changes." Instead the government had a backbencher, the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader, hold a press conference on June 2.

June 2, you'll remember, was the federal election day, when many members were not present in Toronto because they were in their ridings to vote, when the media were concentrating for obvious reasons on federal politics, not on provincial politics, and the member who held the press conference stated clearly that these rule changes he was proposing were his idea and that they weren't government policy; they were simply his idea and they were being put out there for debate and discussion.

Frankly, if that were the case, I would have commended him for it. I don't agree with most of the rule changes, but if a private member simply had done some work and put out an idea for discussion and perhaps be responded to by other members, fine. But what happened that day? One half-hour after that press conference, 30 minutes later, the government House leader sent a letter to the two opposition House leaders in which he said the government has put forward some proposals for changes and that he hoped we would respond to him at the House leaders' meeting the following Thursday, three days later.

Obviously the member who had done this was a stalking-horse, a running dog of the government House leader, considering that he tried to paint the rule changes as an attempt to strengthen the role of individual members,



which is completely at variance with the truth. When you limit the number of days the government has to respond to an individual member, you're not enhancing the role of that member.

Now we have, under the guise of a day when the attention of members, some members, certainly long-standing members, and of the media is distracted by a very sad event, the member for Mississauga West gets up on behalf of the government — at least it was a minster of the crown this time — and moves amendments with no notice. But he tries to paint it as if it was the idea of the three House leaders, which is completely untrue and at variance with the facts.

I would remind the members of the government party of what the member for Parry Sound said in 1992 when rules were discussed for change at that time. He said, and it's been quoted a number of times, that if a government moves unilaterally on rule changes, it will produce an enormous amount of acrimony in the House, and it's going to do that.

The rule changes were unilateral proposals by the government to speed up the government agenda and to diminish the role of individual members in this assembly. They were designed to make it more difficult for opposition members to do their job. The responsibility of opposition members, and for that matter all private members in the House, is to hold the government accountable, to criticize, to propose alternatives, to suggest amendments, and this government finds that to be a nuisance, that it's too slow, that it doesn't make it possible for them to get their agenda through quickly enough.

The member for Mississauga West has proposed a number of changes. These changes are cosmetic. They do not change the central issues; they don't respond to the central issues that have been raised by the opposition in this debate about rules.

I'll deal quickly with the minor ones he has proposed in this amendment. Starting with the last one, I'll go in reverse order. He proposes to change the date on which the new standing orders will not affect questions placed on Orders and Notices. He's going to change it from June 12 to June 23. What does that tell us? That tell us that this government intends that these rule changes will be in effect by the end of this week. That's what it means. This is not about debate and discussion and maybe changing it after there has been time for all members to have input and for the government to respond. That change of the date is just making it possible for the government to have these rule changes in effect by the end of this week.

When will these changes take effect? The amendment proposes that standing order 110 will take effect on the third sessional day after August 1 instead of the first sessional day after August 1. It gives us two more days. Well, whoop-de-de. What a farce.

The next one is the amendment to standing order —

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** You shouldn't have to check this. You had a House leaders' meeting.

**Mr Wildman:** You really don't take this seriously, do you?

**Mr Gilchrist:** Not the righteous indignation, no.

**Mr Wildman:** I didn't intend to be here this afternoon, and I mean that sincerely. I had to speak to this because you guys wouldn't have the courtesy to tell us what we were going to debate today.

**Mr Gilchrist:** The House leader said you knew on Thursday.

**Mr Wildman:** That is a lie.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Algoma, you must withdraw that comment.

**Mr Wildman:** I will withdraw that comment. The veracity of the statement stands.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm afraid I can't accept that. Under the rules you must simply withdraw the statement, member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** In respect to you, Speaker, I will withdraw the statement. I do have some respect for this place.  
**1630**

The government intends to change a couple of other things. The government, in its proposed amendment, was going to limit the number of written questions that an individual member could have on the order paper to four; now they're going to increase that to 10. The member for Scarborough East had indicated that this was a result of discussions among the House leaders. Let me tell you how this discussion occurred. The government House leader said, "How about changing 'four' to '10'?" Our response was, "That's not good enough." So how can this be the result of a discussion and agreement among the House leaders? That was the extent of the discussion.

The government is also, in this amendment, proposing to change the number of days that it takes the government to respond. It is currently 14, and they were changing it to 45; they are now proposing to change it to 24. Well, 24 is better than 45, but it's still not good enough.

The government is proposing to amend this motion on the debate on the budget to change the number of days proposed from three to four, one more day. This wasn't even discussed in the House leaders' meeting. It wasn't even raised. We said, "If you want to have a number of days set aside for budget debate, that's okay with us." These are minor matters; they don't deal with the important issues.

The government is also proposing to give us 15 minutes more debate by changing the time for the vote from 5:45 to 6 pm in a number of the clauses in these proposed rule changes. I'm supposed to be thankful for 10 or 15 minutes more debate? Really. These are supposed to be major amendments that the government is introducing to respond to the concerns of the opposition, so they change the time of the vote from 5:45 to 6 pm. Great. But at the same time, after they give us 15 minutes more debate, they cut the number of minutes for the bell to ring for the vote from 15 minutes to five. As my mother used to say, "Same difference." It still works out to the same thing.

Let's get to the major issues. The fact is that this government is bringing in changes to the rules because they want to move their agenda forward more quickly, because they don't believe they have been able to get things through here quickly enough. They want to cut the amount of time that the opposition has to speak to matters in this House. They want to cut the amount of



time it takes to get a bill from first reading to third reading.

What amendments have they suggested to deal with that? They have proposed that clause 9(c) be changed. What it means is that if they extend the day, they will give us some notice. That's better than not giving us notice. All it means, though, is that members, I guess mainly Toronto-area members, will not be so much up in the air that they won't be able to schedule any meetings in their ridings in the evenings, because they'll know in advance whether the House is going to be sitting and we're going to be debating that night. That's about all it means.

The central issue is not changed in these proposed amendments by the member for Mississauga West. The central issue is that not only can the government extend debate into the evening, which we don't mind, but that the government will still be able to count it as two sessional days in one.

The government is proposing a change in this amendment which will say that the government cannot call the same bill in the evening, when it is being counted as another sessional day, as was debated in the afternoon. What does this mean? What it means is that instead of being able to get one bill through in three days, the government will now be able to get two bills from first reading to third reading, and law, in six days. Right now it takes a minimum of six days to get one bill through, and there are very few governments I know that are able to do that because of the length of speaking times, which hasn't been debated and discussed in these proposed amendments to the changes to the standing orders. The fact is that the government's agenda will still be able to be rushed through under these proposed amendments.

The government has said that they are just bringing in rules to bring us in line with the House of Commons. This isn't a House of Commons rule; this rule comes from the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. What the government ignores is that while the Legislative Assembly rules in British Columbia allow a government to extend debate into the evening and allow the government to count that as two sessional days, in the British Columbia Legislature they have two question periods. They have a question period for each sessional day, so if they have two sessional days in one calendar day, they have two question periods that day. This government is attempting to have their cake and eat it too. They want to have the two sessional days so that they can bring in time allocation more quickly, they can have it in a day and a half instead of in three days, which is the convention now — a day and a half in terms of calendar days — but they don't want to be held accountable by the opposition for the same number of question periods per sessional day, so they can have two sessional days but only one question period.

The government is amending this proposed change to the standing orders in another way. They are proposing to make a change to clause 28(h). The amendment says:

"Except where a standing order or other order fixes the time of the vote, a vote may be deferred at the request of any chief whip of a recognized party in the House. The Speaker shall then defer the taking of the vote to the next

sessional day during the routine proceeding 'Deferred Votes' at which time the bells shall be rung for five minutes."

What does that all mean? Most people listening to that won't really understand the significance. What it means is that this change will facilitate time allocation motions. It will make it easier for the government to have the vote on a time allocation motion deferred to a convenient time for the government.

What the amendments to the proposed changes to the standing orders mean is that this government is still committed to rushing through its agenda, is still committed to limiting the amount of time that members have to hold the government accountable and to debate. There is nothing in the amendment from the member for Mississauga West which deals with the other crucial matter, and that is the limiting of the amount of time members have to speak.

As I said, these are cosmetic. They are not real amendments, and it is terribly galling for me to have the member for Mississauga West, for whom I have a great deal of respect, get up and try to characterize these amendments as if I have agreed to them, as if they are the result of discussions among the three House leaders and the three House leaders have agreed that there are some things wrong with what the government was proposing in its rule changes, and that the government now has brought in an amendment that deals with the concerns of the two opposition House leaders.

That is not correct. That is not the fact. Many of these minor changes have never even been discussed by the House leaders. A few have been suggested by the government House leader in our discussions, but the opposition House leaders have indicated that they are not good enough, and the central issues raised by the opposition House leaders have not been responded to by the government.

1640

I suppose the government will now say they have responded to the issue of the possibility of getting a bill through in three days, in one week. All it means now is they'll be able to get two bills through in two weeks. They're still rushing through their agenda.

What will this actually mean? Let's think back to what has actually occurred in this House in this session. You will recall that there were two very controversial matters before this House at the same time. They were time-allocated. They were Bill 103 and Bill 104. Bill 103 dealt with the megacity for Metropolitan Toronto, one big city, and Bill 104 dealt with the restructuring and amalgamation of school boards all across this province.

The government time-allocated both of those bills. This party introduced thousands of amendments to both of those bills. The Speaker ruled those amendments to be in order on Bill 103 and that led to a long debate on amendments, which the government referred to as a filibuster, that went on for many, many days around the clock.

We held up the passage of Bill 103 because 76% of the population of Metropolitan Toronto had voted against it and as an opposition we saw it as our obligation to



speak on behalf of the majority of the people who were opposed to that legislation and who were affected by it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wildman:** I remind the member who's commenting that only 45% of the population who voted, voted for the government, yet they would not argue that they didn't get 45% of the vote.

Under these proposed rule changes, what this government could have done is instead of having time allocation on these two controversial pieces of legislation and trying to get them through in one week, it could have avoided time allocation and got those two controversial pieces of legislation through in two weeks, from first reading to third reading.

The length of time members have to speak on each of those pieces of legislation would have been limited and the people who had voted against Bill 103 would have had their views put forward by the opposition, but in a very limited fashion. The people who are concerned about the amalgamation of school boards would have had their views put forward, again in a very limited fashion, and the government would get things through and be able to run roughshod over the views of those who were opposed. That's what these amendments are about. It's about getting the trains to run on time, as has been said.

These are only token changes. They don't respond to the significant concerns of the opposition and of the public to ensure that the public can have input into the process and can be heard by the government. We have a government that isn't interested in hearing opposing views. We have a government that isn't interested in responding to concerns of people who don't agree with them. The problem is, it makes it possible for the government to move more quickly. They can make more mistakes, and all of us will not benefit from it.

The introduction of these amendments by the member for Mississauga West is one more example of the lack of respect this government has for the Legislative Assembly, for the democratic process, for the opposition in this House and for the public in general. They're determined to move forward and they don't care if anyone disagrees with them.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I'm pleased to participate in this debate dealing with the proposed changes of the rules of this place. Most of the people in the opposition parties and many people on the government side have sat in opposition and in government and have experienced governments moving ahead with legislation and opposition fighting that.

It's a never-ending debate, in my estimation — having sat only since 1990, and I know many members have sat much longer than that — as to how fast a government should be allowed to put through legislation, and similarly, how much right an opposition party or an opposition member should have to slow down the government, or in some cases stop the government from even moving.

I must say, we have seen since 1990 a couple of occasions — one was the current Premier of the province, the member for Nipissing, as the leader of the Conservative Party, the third party at the time, introducing a private member's bill dealing with rivers and streams. It was quite obviously, blatantly a delaying tactic of New

Democratic legislation. The New Democratic government stopped that. You can't do that for an indefinite period of time. There's a limit as to how long it takes to introduce bills. There are time frames in this place as to how long it takes to do that.

I'm going to refer to three parties, because I think all three parties in this place have participated in delaying tactics. In the Liberal Party, Mr Curling, the member for Scarborough North, refused to vote on a piece of legislation when it was called on, and then he ignored the order of the Speaker to remove himself for his refusal. Essentially, it turned into a one-man sit-in by the member for Scarborough North in this place. This place came to a dead stop. The Speaker left the chamber, members from both opposition parties surrounded Mr Curling and prevented the Sergeant at Arms from physically removing the member for Scarborough North, and it finally took negotiation from the government and the members of the opposition parties to enable the member for Scarborough North to leave this place.

The question is, if the rules aren't changed, how long should a member of the opposition or any member of this place have to stop this place? Can an individual do that? Should an individual in this House have the right to stop this place from operating, to just make it come to a dead stop? Should a member have that right? I don't think he or she should.

The purpose of this place is to listen to debate for and against pieces of legislation. The purpose of the opposition, if they don't like what a government is doing, is to try and persuade the government to change its direction, to make amendments, but I don't think this place is designed so that an elected member of this place can simply come in here and stop the Legislature from proceeding. That's what the member for Scarborough North did. Some people gave him credit. I quite frankly don't give him credit. I don't think that's the way we should be doing business in this place.

The more recent incident, which was referred to by the last speaker, was the great filibuster, as it has been called. Some members of the opposition are particularly proud of that. That's where we went on for, what, 10 days, 24 hours a day, where members of the opposition introduced thousands of amendments.

**Mr Wildman:** Which were in order.

**Mr Tilson:** I'm not denying that they were in order and I'm not denying that members of the opposition have the right to introduce amendments. I remember occasionally members of the government would stand up and ask the Speaker: "Are they frivolous? Are they vexatious?" and yes, to the member, they were in order.

**1650**

But I guess the question is, could an opposition party in particular — and all of us have been in government in the last decade, all three parties have been in office — have the right to quadruple the number of amendments they introduce and hold this place to ransom? I don't mean to provoke the opposition, but do they have that right? Do they have the right to hold this place up for an indefinite period of time?

I give credit to the opposition. They were very ingenious in thinking of this tactic, in my estimation. I don't



approve of it because, again, I don't think that's the way to do business in this place. I don't think that's the way to operate this province. It costs thousands of dollars to operate this place, opening 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Mr Wildman:** What a bogus argument.

**Mr Tilson:** Well, I'm sorry, it does.

**Mr Wildman:** The Speaker said it's bogus.

**Mr Tilson:** You can agree or disagree with me. I guess the question I'm asking you as members of the opposition, particularly the members who are interjecting now who were in government, is, does an opposition party have the right to indefinitely hold up the House?

**Mr Wildman:** No, not indefinitely.

**Mr Tilson:** The member says no, and there lies the question, because in the great filibuster, which happened fairly recently, you could conceivably think up amendment after amendment after amendment after amendment and go on for more than 10 days. You could go on for months.

**Mr Wildman:** But they have to be tabled by a certain time.

**Mr Tilson:** They could be tabled by a certain time. It is possible. Now that it has happened, it's possible. If an opposition party doesn't like a particular piece of legislation, and obviously there are many pieces of legislation where this opposition doesn't like what this government is doing, if you felt like, "We're going to stop this government from doing anything; we're going to freeze this province; we're going to stop it dead in its tracks," that's the ability you have now. You've discovered it. You've discovered a means within the rules of presenting amendments which are in order, essentially bringing this province to a dead stop.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Name one piece of legislation we were able to trash.

**Mr Wildman:** Name one bill that you haven't been able to pass.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Name one bill that you haven't been able to pass.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Order. The member for Nipigon, the member for Sudbury East and the member for Algoma, order.

**Mr Tilson:** The member for Scarborough North, of course, discovered a way of simply not voting. There may be other ways as we proceed. Rivers and streams was one.

The question is, do we stand by as a government and allow members of the opposition to — in my view, you have the right, as members of the opposition. How do I know that? I sat over there. I got upset with many of your government bills, as you well know: Bill 40, for example, and on it goes. We get into a philosophical difference, and I'm not here to get into that.

I believe that an opposition has the right to debate and has the right to put forward views and to say, "You people are crazy in what you're doing. You're destroying the province," etc, that type of rhetoric which everybody uses when they're in opposition. But do you have the right to stop this place from operating? I say you do not have that right.

**Ms Martel:** Name one bill you haven't been able to pass. Name one that the government hasn't been able to get through.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Sudbury East.

**Mr Tilson:** It is for these and other reasons that these draft rules were introduced to this place for debate. The members of the opposition have said it's undemocratic and democracy is coming to an end in the province of Ontario, but I haven't heard one suggestion from the opposition on how to improve the decorum of this place — not one. That's your job. Your job is to come forward with alternatives, not just to sit there and criticize. Anybody can criticize, but your job is to come forward with alternatives, and you haven't come forward with one alternative.

I'm going to refer to some of the amendments that were brought forward, the proposed amendments to the standing orders of this place.

**Mr Wildman:** We weren't prepared to concede that you could group amendments.

**Mr Tilson:** The member says he wasn't prepared to —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. There will be no interjections, please.

**Mr Pouliot:** We are fighting for democracy.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, member for Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** The member for Nipigon is fighting for his democratic rights.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Nipigon, I don't need to repeat it. Member for Dufferin-Peel.

**Mr Tilson:** All the members of this place have a copy of the notice of motion and the proposed amendments that were read into the record today. The first one is a general purpose clause, which in my estimation gives more authority to the Speaker. I can't believe that all members of this place don't agree with those four principles that are set forward, that members of the House have the right to submit motions, resolutions, bills — I won't read them all. They're all there before you.

In my estimation, this place gives the Speaker more authority to do more things to better run this place, and the Speaker has a larger discretion, and I believe the Speaker needs that. Without provoking particularly the New Democratic members again, with respect to the issue of putting forward amendment after amendment after amendment after amendment, the Speaker now has the right to group. It's now codified in a later order.

Another question is the next one, which is that standing order 9(c) be deleted, and it talks about meeting between 6:30 and 9:30. Many members of the opposition are particularly annoyed with that order.

**Mr Wildman:** We are prepared to sit. We just don't want it to be counted as a second day.

**Mr Tilson:** Give me a chance and I will respond to that. I listened attentively to what you put forward.

To the member for Algoma, you commented that, yes, this has come from British Columbia, which allows this type of extension, and, yes, he is absolutely right, it allows for two question periods. He's absolutely right. It seems to be the main opposition from the two opposition parties that there is —

**Mr Wildman:** Before you say it, they don't count the answers when they move the clock.



**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Algoma.

**Mr Tilson:** I'm trying to put forward some comments here. I had the courtesy to listen to you and I hope you'll give me the same courtesy.

In British Columbia, yes, the member for Algoma was quite right when he indicated that two question periods are allowed, but you've got to remember that those are only 15 minutes.

**Mr Wildman:** No, they are 45 minutes — 15 minutes for questions. They don't count the answers.

**Mr Tilson:** They are 15 minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Wildman:** Why doesn't he put the facts on the table?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Algoma, you had your time. It's his time now. Just listen attentively. You'll have a chance. We'll go by rotation and you'll have a chance to debate. It's his turn. Member for Dufferin-Peel.

**Mr Tilson:** It has been referred to by the finance minister in a question in the House, and I have some Hansard before me of a response to a question by the member for St Catharines. I think this is important, and if I've got the facts incorrect, I'm sure it will be corrected at a later date. My understanding was that it was 15 minutes. If I'm incorrect, I stand to be corrected, but there are certainly other jurisdictions where there are shorter periods of time. We have an hour each day.

To quote Mr Eves from Hansard back on June 19: "...Parliament in Westminster where the Prime Minister of Great Britain stands up and makes himself available for all of about 20 minutes twice a week to answer questions." It was here where I got the facts, if I have them correct. This is what Mr Eves, who has researched it, has said: "British Columbia has a 15-minute question period.... The province of Saskatchewan has a 20-minute question period."

1700

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, it is not questions and answers, it's a debate. It's his turn. If you have any remarks, any interjection you would like to bring in or anything you may oppose, wait for your turn.

**Mr Tilson:** The House of Commons has a 45-minute question period. All these times are shorter. Quite frankly, the issue of accountability, I would submit to you and to other members of the House, is there and remains to be there with respect to those sessional days.

There are other sections that are interesting. The naming of a member: Very little time has been spent on that. Standing orders 15 and 16 have been deleted. Last week a number of the New Democratic caucus, those who were in the House — those who were participating in committees, I noticed, weren't here — put on little stickers. Of course the Speaker ruled them out of order, they refused to take them off and the Speaker named them one by one and they left this place.

The question remains, what is a minor offence and what is a serious offence? In my short time here I have had a great deal of difficulty determining the difference between minor and serious because they seems to be the same. Whenever some offence occurs of the orders of this place, the rules of this place, the member leaves. Mr

Curling, the member for Scarborough North, was an exception. That situation was an exception, but other than that, I can't really recall any other situations where the Speaker on that particular day says, "You're named," and you're gone for the day.

It seems to me, with respect, if members commit very serious offences, that something should be more than that.

**Ms Martel:** Call the police.

**Mr Tilson:** You say, "Call the police." You can be silly about it, but the fact of the matter is that there are serious rule offences and there are minor ones and there doesn't seem to be a distinction between the two. It seems to me that if a member is acting inappropriately in a very serious manner, the Speaker should have the right to treat that differently from a minor offence.

This rule says, "When a member is named by the Speaker, if the offence is a minor one, the Speaker may order the member to withdraw for the balance of the sessional day; but if the matter appears to the Speaker to be of a more serious nature, the Speaker shall put the question on the motion being made, no amendment, adjournment or debate being allowed, 'that such member be suspended from the service of the House,' such suspension being for any time stated in the motion not exceeding eight sessional days."

**Mr Pouliot:** Dictatorship.

**Mr Tilson:** You can say that's dictatorship; I don't think it is. If a member in this place is acting in an irresponsible and serious manner, he or she should be treated accordingly. If you don't do that, we're going to have chaos.

I haven't much time to speak, but with respect to the change, we now have that when members are speaking in their place, the lead speaker speaks for 90 minutes, or has the ability to speak for 90 minutes, and then each subsequent speaker can speak for half an hour, 30 minutes. I must say it has become a very rare occasion for the lead speaker or the critic of the opposition party, or the minister indeed or parliamentary assistant, the opening speaker, to speak for 90 minutes, very rare indeed. In fact, generally what happens is, on unanimous consent, two speakers share that time.

There's no question that members of the opposition and members of the government have the right to speak for and against. I guess it leads back to the time the New Democratic Party's member for Welland-Thorold gave his famous filibuster, 17 hours. He had a filibuster. You can't filibuster in this place any more; you can't go on forever. The question remains, if you're a member of the opposition, how much time do you have to criticize the government? Should 90 minutes be fair? Should forever be fair? Should 17 hours be fair? What is fair? I ask you. You're supposed to be providing constructive alternatives.

With respect to what these standing orders are saying, the opening speaker shall speak for 40 minutes, and then after that I believe it's 20 minutes.

**Mr Wildman:** And then 10.

**Mr Tilson:** And then 10.

**Ms Martel:** You'll be gone by then.

**Mr Tilson:** Maybe I should be.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Dufferin-Peel, just ignore the interjections.



**Mr Tilson:** Oh, it's so tempting.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just ignore them, please.

**Mr Tilson:** The other issue which seems to be of contest to the opposition parties is the issue with respect to changing the order of routine proceedings. One of the latest tricks that has occurred —

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Lake Nipigon, I have repeatedly told you to stop interjecting. I would ask you to stop interjecting.

**Mr Tilson:** There obviously are attempts by the opposition from time to time to delay proceedings, particularly if they're annoyed at action that is being taken, particularly if the action is being taken by a government in a resolution or bill. One of the things they do is that somewhere in the line just before orders of the day they ask for an adjournment, 30 minutes, and they can do that. It causes substantial delays. I must say, in my estimation as one member of this place, I find those tactics very trivial. Is that the way business should be done in Ontario, by ringing bells? This has been going on for some time. Is that the way you, if you were ever to regain power over on this side, want to do business? Is that how you want to do it, by simply allowing those trivial tricks to delay the proceedings of this place? I would hope not.

One of the other issues which may be considered of a minor nature, and I think the member for Algoma mentioned it, is the questions on the order paper. The original draft amendment said four, and now that has been increased to a proposal of 10. You look at these things, these Orders and Notices, and they go on for pages and pages and pages. Yes, members of the opposition have the right to put forward questions, but they all have to be answered by the staff.

**Interjection:** That's good.

**Mr Tilson:** Yes, good. Exactly. But should you be given the unlimited discretion of putting forward questions and questions and questions forever? I submit that some of the questions are very repetitive, are frivolous and don't need to be asked. I know we're going to get into a debate since you're in the opposition and I'm in the government, but I think we've all seen how it works. That is why that has come forward. When you start looking at pages and pages of these questions on the order paper, one has to provide some sort of restraint on that issue.

The issue of the independent member is being dealt with in these rules. I understand that the member for Elgin had some say in those proposals. That's occurring. We have one independent member in the House of Commons. In the last government, there were several other independent members sitting in this place. From time to time that happens. Right now, they don't have any rights; they have zero rights at all, unless the Speaker feels in a good mood to give him or her the right to speak. I feel that these amendments being put forward for the independent member, not only to speak in this place but to sit on at least one standing committee, are good changes.

1710

I know it has been quoted before. The opposition enjoys quoting what the now Premier said and what the

finance minister said when he was House leader. Well, I'm going to quote the former House leader for the Liberal Party, the government House leader at the time, the member for Renfrew North. He made a number of statements almost eight years ago.

"We felt we were facing a pattern of obstructionism that was really making this place somewhat less effective and less effective than the people of Ontario expect it to be." That applies today. "What we saw here through the spring of 1988 to late spring 1989 was unprecedented in so far as the traditions and the customs and practices of this Legislature were concerned." That's happening today.

"These rule changes are significant. They do move this Legislature forward, and they move it forward in a way that respects a lot of what is being done in other parliaments in the British Commonwealth. I believe they are changes that effect a fair and reasonable balance, giving to the government a clearer means by which to get on with business. Surely the emphasis must be on debate, on decision."

I respect the member for Renfrew North.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I don't think you really mean that. Tell us you don't believe that.

**Mr Tilson:** Well, I do respect him. I think that one quote, that one sentence — surely the emphasis must not be on stalling, on delaying. Surely the emphasis should be, as the member for Renfrew North said, on debate, on decision.

To again quote Mr Conway, the member for Renfrew North:

"Government members always think the opposition is being really rude and obnoxious and not doing what an upright citizen should do. Opposition members think the government is really being pigheaded about all this and ramrodding something down the throats of everyone else. This is the heart of the parliamentary system."

That's the way it has been. All members of this House have discovered that the system we have in this place isn't working. The members in the opposition are going to scream that it's undemocratic and that democracy has come to an end. If they don't like the proposed rule changes, I challenge them to come forward with some proposed rules that will make these things that have been happening stop.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I don't think that, other than Bill 26, there is a more important bill or motion before the House than this one. The reason for it, of course, is because it affects the procedures of the whole House.

I must tell you that I take my job as an opposition member seriously, to try to be critical and to critique something on the issue. It's not easy not to be cynical when you see the way, first of all, this motion was introduced. It was introduced on the day of the federal election, the first time since 1874 that the members of the provincial Legislature have not been released to participate in the federal election. Why? Because the media would be preoccupied.

The motion was introduced into the House later in the week, and then today it was introduced, without any notification to our House leader, with literally minutes to



go, on a day on which one of their own members is having his funeral, Mr Larry Grossman. Why? Because the media will of course be preoccupied with covering the life and the work and the contributions Mr Grossman has made. I bet that Mr Grossman, if he were here today, would be very upset with what is going on here.

I think it's important that we understand the context. I can recall that during the discussions on Bill 26, when we tried to — and I guess we successfully did. We caused the government to back off from trying to ram something through very quickly. Because we were able to hold the government up a bit, they introduced about 155 amendments of their own to that piece of legislation and backed off on many issues that had to do with the rights of people and the role of this Legislature.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Patten:** Mr Speaker, could I get some quiet?

I can well recall talking with — I won't name the member. It would be ironic. I won't name the member on the government side who at that time said: "We got elected. We should be able to do what we want." That is, unfortunately, part of the mentality. Some people come here from business and think the same way: "If I have a business licence, I can do anything I want, as long as it's within the law." That shows there is little understanding or little sensitivity to the concept of what responsible government is.

**Mr Gilchrist:** You get your way and we don't.

**Mr Patten:** Mr Gilchrist, I'd like to address that, because I think you're one of the proponents of: "Just move everything through. To hell with anybody else. The opposition is just a pain in the neck." I'd rather use other parts of the body to be more illustrative of your attitude.

But there is a step in there: The party that forms the government formulates their legislation — fine — and then they have a responsibility to put it before the people. They do that in a Legislature which has a balance of opportunity for discussion, exploration, debate and critique. That's a form of parliamentary procedure we have. I'll address this in the words of many of the Conservative Party's members when they were in opposition, when in 1992 the NDP was looking at changing some of those bills and what some of the comments were, and we'll see where they stand today.

I hear the term "efficiency" and one of my colleagues said that the Legislature is not the same as a company —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Pouliot:** You appeal to the worst instincts. Press all the sensitive buttons: attack the poor, move up the food chain.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Nipigon, the member for Ottawa Centre has the floor.

**Mr Patten:** Thank you to the member for Nipigon.

I hear the term "efficiency" being used. Efficiency, of course, is a relative term, related to what you are doing. I know there is a prevailing view that we always take the business view: everything's business. I'm surprised that there hasn't been a bill put forward in this Legislature to privatize the Legislature itself. Maybe that is in the works.

What do you talk about in terms of efficiency if you're a heart surgeon or a neurosurgeon? Of course the busi-

ness view would be: "We've got to get these procedures down into so many hours. We've got to average it out and we've got to make sure that the surgeons can only operate for a certain period of time." If they can't do the job within that period of time, then what are you going to do? Walk away from the operating table and let the patient die? It's a silly concept unless you apply the concept of efficiency to the reality of, what is your mission and what is your responsibility? In terms of ours, it is of course to debate, to explore, to criticize, to suggest and all those kinds of things, in the interest of the best possible legislation for the people of Ontario.

1720

I also want to say that in the prelude to the paper provided by the member for Nepean, not only I but every member in this House should have been personally insulted by attempting to suggest that our workweek of 20 hours in the House — why were we not ready to work as most other workers are, who work 37 to 40 hours a week? Frankly, I was insulted. I think most members were, or if they weren't, they should be.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Not the hardworking ones.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Patten:** The member for Nepean knows damn well that part of his job is to go home to his constituents, to his riding, and listen to what people are saying about proposed legislation, listen to what people are saying about what the government is doing and how it's doing it and what they think and feel about that. That takes time, to go to meetings, to attend conferences or to have people in your riding office or to visit hospitals or to visit schools, whatever it may be. That takes time. That's the only way, in my opinion, you can make sure you don't retain tunnel vision, by getting out and talking to the people of Ontario, especially the people you represent.

That takes a lot of time. I can't tell you how many nights and weekends I work in my riding, as I think most members do. To insinuate that somehow 20 hours in this House is almost the total job of MPPs is an insult to every member in this House, and I think every member knows that: the time you spend with people not only in your own riding but in other parts of Ontario travelling around listening to people on different pieces of legislation.

I fear this motion fits with what I would describe as, "The heavy hand of government strikes again." The government is showing that it does not trust the existing structures. It doesn't trust the existing structures in terms of health services restructuring; it had to set up the Health Services Restructuring Commission as a separate body, ostensibly to have more objective analysis of what may happen. Why did it not negotiate with the district health councils, which had proposals, had all the data? Health restructuring commissions are out there.

We don't even know the database on which they're operating. We have to wait, like little children, for information, not even sure of the information they're dealing with, the nature of their analysis. When we ask them to provide independent analysis of some of their recommendations that don't hold water, it has apparently no affect at all. Of course it's at arm's length from the government, and the Minister of Health will say, "This



was not me, this was this independent body of experts," in relation to whatever part of Ontario they're going to be dealing with.

They have a report, I understand, from Ottawa-Carleton that is complete, but they're not releasing it. Why is that? Is that because they want to share their findings and their final conclusions with the government and want to talk about that and want to explore its reaction? Hopefully, that's part of it. Is it because they want to completely brief and share all the information on which they have based their findings and their recommendations? Hopefully, that's true too. Some people may say the reason they're waiting is because the House is still in session and the government will be held more accountable by virtue of question period if they come through with what might be, and most likely will be, very unpopular recommendations.

We have in the field of education what's called, I think cynically, the Education Improvement Commission. It might better have been called the education implementation or adjustment commission, but they always use these neat terms. There's some wordsmith in the Premier's office who's obviously very good at coining these phrases that often mean the antithesis of the true mission of the legislation. This Education Improvement Commission, by the way, will be another vehicle that will stand between the government and school boards so the minister can say, "It wasn't me, it wasn't the government; it is this group that will be sorting out these particular issues."

Then, because of all the changes that are going to be taking place in health, in education, in municipalities, what do we find? Lo and behold, another commission — two. The commission for the transition phase of groups, in a municipality, for example, where there is an amalgamation: What happens to the workers who have one contract and one arrangement and the other workers on another? I spent a little time studying this. I must ask, why did the government not use the Ontario Labour Board? They say because the Ontario Labour Board is busy, too busy to deal with this particular issue.

That's not the information I glean when I do an analysis of the situation. Why didn't they take some of the resources they will automatically have to spend and add them to the role of the labour board? There's a body of knowledge and experience there that will not be utilized. The Ontario Labour Board is highly respected, does a lot of work. It's probably the greatest body of knowledge in labour relations in our province. What is this other commission going to cost? Nobody's talked about that. It'll be funny to see — it'll be interesting to see, rather, not funny — how much all these interventionist, transitory, government-set-up structures that affect the lives of people are going to cost.

Then we had, in terms of legislation, the impositions: Bill 26; Bill 103, the imposition on Metropolitan Toronto, when the Premier himself said he would never impose amalgamation on any municipality. Tell that to the people of Metro Toronto.

Then with a major bill, Bill 99, the behaviour of this government: snuck in on a Thursday afternoon, with two hours' notice to the opposition parties, with no notification. This doesn't happen by accident. They're not that

sloppy. They're sloppy on a number of issues, but they're not that sloppy. This is calculated: "How can we catch the opposition off guard? How can we catch them when the media is preoccupied and they have their attention on other things? What's the quietest time?"

Thursday afternoon is probably one of the quieter times, because the members who don't live in Metropolitan Toronto often travel hundreds of miles to their ridings so they could go to a meeting on Thursday afternoon or Thursday night in their ridings and spend Friday and the weekend there and get ready to come back here again, late Sunday night, usually. These things are not by accident, but that's what this government likes to do, like today, as I've said: notification minutes before this was introduced.

Then we hear, "We want an opportunity for the backbenchers on the government side." Let me address that. The backbenchers on the government side have a luxury the opposition parties do not have. First of all, if your caucus operates democratically, you have prior knowledge about what's coming down, what your government wants, what your cabinet wants. You should be having hours and hours of opportunity to sit in caucus and debate these issues and form subcommittees and throw in your ideas and test some of these ideas etc etc. We in opposition do not have that luxury.

You say you get no chance to speak to it. It's got nothing to do with offering your ideas, unless you have an undemocratic caucus, I say to you; there is some evidence that may be true, according to some of your own members, that it is not as democratic as it may be. 1730

But that's where the backbenchers on the government side can have their greatest voice: in the very creation of the legislation your government is proposing. You should be a big part of that. That's where things happen. We are not afforded that opportunity, for obvious reasons. When you say "to be able to come here and speak," you should have said that prior to the introduction of that legislation. That should have had some effect, hopefully. If you were right, if you had good observations, good suggestions, that would have made a difference and you would have some satisfaction in knowing that you carried forward some thoughts that made a difference in the proposed legislation. But no, I suspect there's frustration because that's not what has happened. The only other recourse is to try to stand up in the House and comment on it. It's a poor alternative.

I would like to give an analogy: It's like a bus. Let's say the driver of the bus is the government House leader. We're all on the bus, and the bus is filled. Most of the members are from the government side. When you step on the bus and the bus gets going, the opposition is told, "We're just going here, this direction." Then, because some of the members who are sitting on that bus are opposition members, they say, "Mr Bus Driver, I'd like to ask you, if you're going to such-and-such a destination, why don't you take this road over here, because you could get there a little quicker?" or, "If on the way you want to stop and listen to people, why not go over to this community?" That would be normal for the opposition to do, because they don't have the strategy. The bus driver



does, and the government members on the bus all know it, so they don't say very much, because they're in the know. The opposition is not in the know, until they get on the bus and find out where they're going.

The member for Scarborough East, for example, the other day used the phrase "the nattering nabobs of negativism." What a cynic. I would say to that that the "napalm bombs of bullyism" is really what should best describe you guys.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Is that your idea of alliteration? I see we need more education reforms.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Scarborough East, keep control.

**Mr Patten:** So I would say to you, on the issue of backbencher involvement and participation, look to your own caucus for that kind of an opportunity.

I'd like to share with the government a few comments that were made by some of their own revered and respected members of the Legislature. Some of them may have already been quoted, but one in particular that I would like to quote has to do with the present Minister of Finance, Mr Eves. This was during a debate in 1992. I wasn't in the House at the time; of course, I was watching it faithfully on television because it was so exciting. It was so exciting at the time, I followed this day and night. That was a debate on some pending rule changes that the NDP wanted to bring in, and the Conservative Party didn't like these recommendations at all. Ernie Eves said:

"I think one has to understand that the only way opposition — not just opposition members but any public opposition to any proposed piece of legislation — can be effectively dealt with or talked about under our system of government, under the parliamentary system of government, is through the opposition parties' ability to debate, and yes, on occasion even stall or slow down progress of a particular bill, and that has worked very effectively over the years against governments of all political stripes.

"This government" — at the time he was referring to the NDP — "surely is no different from any other government before it. Be we Conservative governments, Liberal governments or now New Democratic governments, we have all had difficulties with very controversial pieces of legislation."

He goes on to say:

"The party that has always stood for...minority groups and minority interests, was always willing to go to bat for an individual's freedom of speech and right to differ, now wants to introduce a set of totalitarian rules or dictatorial rules — despotic rules, actually — so it can cut off debate and have any piece of legislation it wants in a certain given amount of time."

That's what Ernie Eves said at the time. Then we have Norm Sterling. I quoted part of what he said in his statement today. Norm Sterling, the Minister of the Environment — I wonder where he stands today — said in a letter quoted in the House by Ernie Eves: "In our 125-year history the rules (our constitution)," the rules of our House, "have never been changed without negotiations with the other political parties. Parliament is intended to be a balance between the right of government

to govern and the opposition to oppose. In a majority Parliament" — and I underline that; a majority Parliament, which is what we have — "the only tool for the opposition to seek compromise is to delay."

I go on further in Mr Sterling's letter: "If Mr Rae gets his way (and he eventually can), he will virtually eliminate the usefulness of opposition members in the Legislature and in committees, save for question period. Over the past six years in opposition I have been successful in forcing the government of the day to accept some amendments to their legislation. My only tool was to delay or threaten delay. What sense is there for me to bother" to be here "to debate if I have no means to make them listen?" "To be here" was my addition. That was Norm Sterling. I wonder what he's saying in caucus these days about the proposed rule changes coming down that will change the face of this Legislature.

Mr Eves goes on to say: "Rules governing our Legislature are boring stuff for the public. I understand why the public believe that we are being childish in using every stalling technique available to us. However, we are fighting for the life of our democratic institution and must continue to do so until the government agrees to sit down and find a reasonable compromise. We will continue to be ready to negotiate new rules which will make Parliament more efficient" — not afforded the opposition today.

Mr Eves continues: "Because of the fact that opposition parties exercised their right to delay and express opposition to certain aspects of that legislation and because members of the public had an opportunity for weeks on end to come and express their concerns — and very sincere concerns at that — to many different aspects of those pieces of legislation, the end result was that we ended up with better legislation.

"That is exactly how this place is supposed to work and why it works so well. That is why, in my opinion, our system of government is far superior to the republican or presidential system of government." Mr Ernie Eves, the present finance minister; I wonder if he's sharing his views.

He goes on to say that introducing legislative changes "can't be done by holding a gun to somebody's head, so to speak" — I've heard that phrase used in a few of the speeches on this particular motion — "and it can't be done by forcing unilateral rule changes on members of the other two parties." What is happening? That's what we're getting: something being forced on the opposition.

As has already been said in a nutshell, the biggest and most important change is that the government will be able to proceed without the messiness of the opposition parties intervening; this is efficiency. Well, it's not efficiency, because you are not afforded the views of members from all over this particular province, with different backgrounds, different talents, different observations. The beauty of this place, at the end of the day, is the opportunity to hear viewpoints. The system is set up and designed to protect the people of Ontario from tyranny.

What's tyranny? Tyranny is when somebody grabs power, takes power and tries to do whatever they want



when they want. In Latin America, that's called a junta. You take power, you do what you want and, "Everyone else be quiet, because we are right." I must say in all regret that I feel some of that attitude is there with this particular government.

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I suggest that I don't think any government in any Legislature in Canada, any single party, has the right to impose unilateral changes. They should not have that right. I, for one, propose that we should have a committee, let's say four members from the government side, two members from the Liberals, two members from the NDP, and let them go to work and hammer it out. They would have to convince each other of rules that make sense. They would have to be big enough to think of this institution as being germane and core to our very way of life in Ontario, our democratic way of life that we have now taken for granted in many ways, which is a hazard.

I used to feel proud, as I went around the world — when I worked in international development I visited almost 60 countries — to talk about the democracy in Canada. But if the implementation of these rules —

*Interjections.*

**M. Patten :** Monsieur, s'il vous plaît. Sacrement.

Excuse me. I'm sorry, Mr Speaker. I withdraw that statement.

**Mr Pouliot:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please take your seat, member for Nipigon. I think I heard the same word. Do you withdraw it?

**Mr Patten:** Yes.

I feel very deeply about this. I feel that our way of life is based upon the health of the Legislature. I fear that the media is not paying much attention to this. People outside, for whatever reason — our vehicles of communication perhaps are not as effective as they should be. But if we lose the right in the opposition be able to critique something satisfactorily and reasonably, I say to you that every Ontario individual and the media themselves will lose rights as well. They'll wake up and say, "What happened to the Ontario we care about, that was so democratic?"

The democratic veneer is very thin, and as the member for Carleton East said the other day, it can be chipped away in many small steps. If that's allowed to happen, one day we may wake up and find ourselves in situations like those unfortunate individuals who live in other countries we call totalitarian states or dictatorial states, non-democratic states. We are facing the Legislature of Ontario the most undemocratic Legislature in all of Canada if these rules are implemented. That is the gospel truth. We can't let that happen. I hope the people of Ontario wake up, and I hope the members individually stand up for the Legislature of Ontario.

*Report continues in volume B.*

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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 23 June 1997

Lundi 23 juin 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 juin 1997

*Report continued from volume A.*

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## STANDING ORDERS REFORM RÉFORME DU RÈGLEMENT

Continuing the adjourned debate on the motion for adoption of amendments to the standing orders.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I have seldom heard someone speak so passionately as the member for Ottawa, the previous speaker, feeling, rightly so, that his rights as a member are being impacted negatively. I am very much in agreement with what the member said. Mon collègue l'a mentionné dans un ton certain et je suis d'accord avec ses propos.

Let me begin, while we still have the authority, the recognition, the right to do so, to voice in the strongest terms my deeply felt opposition to this kind of hijacking of our democracy. Rule changes and streamlining have taken place since the beginning of parliaments, but in this case they have gone beyond any imaginable threshold. To say that they've gone too far will not suffice. The philosophy of "action directe" will result in an opposition that will be muzzled, shackled, handcuffed. Democracy will take it in the neck. We used to have the democratic right to participate, to oppose at times. This is a constitutional monarchy. That right has been taken away.

Incidentally, as we address the intentions of the government vis-à-vis the House rules, without notice the government comes through and announces some amendments. For the most part, they're benign, they don't mean a lot. But the courtesy of notice has not been extended to the Liberals or to the NDP. Then the government has the audacity, the gall, within two hours after introducing the amendments, to move to present, to table a closure, a time allocation motion so that this travesty can become law by the end of the week.

What is being done here is wrong, wrong and wrong again; the magnitude of the changes that are being proposed so that the train can once again run on time, so that the revolution will not have to explain, will not have to consult with the opposition and with other Ontarians, so that they can deliver their agenda without interference and, sadly, without the benefits of equilibrium, because the opposition has a different philosophy. When the three parties can work together, inevitably the legislation that emanates, that results from consultation, from healthy debate is immensely better than without, immensely better than what is being attempted.

No words are too strong. This regime, these reformists do not wish to be governed at all. The poor, the marginalized do not wish to be governed badly. But these people deliberately and systematically are shaking the

very institution, the very foundation of Parliament. A cynic would perhaps draw some parallel — "Oh, the system is strong, it will never happen here" — but we know the system is fragile. Little by little, step by step, they march on to the point where they will be able to table first reading of a bill and within a matter of days have it become law, without scrutiny, with very little scrutiny. Members of the opposition will critique, will not be able to do nearly as efficient a job. The public, through that filter, will not be able to critique, for the bill will pass and the opportunity will not be there to seize and to request the government to have a second and third look. They will just push it through.

An hour and a half — 90 minutes of debate. If you're the critic for a ministry, then you lead the charges as that critic for an hour and a half. Now you're reduced to 40 minutes. So many things to say but so little time to say them. You'll have to come out with one-liners, because it has been decreed. Big Bertha is marching on, following the example. Let me tell you, some of the Reformers must have read the memoirs or the annals of Salazar, Franco, or those of Mobutu soon to be published. General Pinochet would begin to recognize himself. No, sir, no sanction. If you're afraid, sir, they will march all over you.

When we talk about health reforms, people in your riding are not consulted; not with these people they're not. You are given a month to react after they close the Montfort Hospital.

Vous la connaissez, l'histoire de Montfort et la consultation. Pour vous, pour vos concitoyens, pour le père, pour la famille, l'institution, c'est certain que c'étaient les premiers pas. Les enfants y sont nés. Pour maman c'était le son de sa voix, pour papa le bruit de son pas. Aujourd'hui Montfort n'est pas là. L'échéancier que ces gens ont dicté à Montfort est la loi du cadenas. Les premiers pas, le son de sa voix, le bruit de son pas, l'institution : l'âme de la communauté, sans consultation, le vol en pleine nuit, la chance de vivre, d'évoluer, d'être comme les autres.

À l'échelle de l'éducation, c'est la même chose. Vous l'avez vécue. Semaine après semaine, au fil des mois depuis deux ans on les entend, on en connaît les conséquences : un système affaibli d'éducation, un système de santé affaibli, des citoyens d'âge d'or qui ont peur, qui vivent dans l'anxiété à cause du prix des médicaments, c'est ça les résultats de la Révolution. Une Assemblée législative qui siège continuellement pour se donner ses outils néfastes, pour se permettre de changer le visage de l'Ontario, la façon dont on vit, notre façon de travailler, l'impact de tous les services au nom de l'entreprise privée, que ces gens inévitablement travaillent mieux que notre fonction publique.



Dans certains cas, parce que nous ne sommes pas contre les changements, oui. Dans d'autres cas il faut y repenser, il faut trouver l'alternative. Ce qu'on leur demande, c'est d'appliquer les freins. Trop de changements, trop rapidement; donnez-nous la chance de digérer et d'assimiler votre politique. Monsieur le Gouvernement, attention.

Maintenant, l'état de siège est rendu chez nous, à l'Assemblée législative. Permettez-moi de citer les commentaires des membres du gouvernement, mais pas l'opposition.

The truth is out. This is what Toni Skarica — Mr Skarica, former prosecutor, crown attorney, former parliamentary assistant, a friend and a colleague — says, and I'm quoting verbatim: "There's something wrong when the Premier and a couple of unelected staff people can run the entire province. It's a dictatorship."

Toni Skarica said that, a member of the government party, an honest person. They got to him. I wouldn't be surprised if within a week he doesn't have a phone in his constituency office or if the furniture is not removed. They'll strike with passion. They shoot to kill. "You do as we say, as the Premier's office says. Otherwise you don't belong." I would expect Toni not to get a helping hand but to get the back of the hand. This is the fate that awaits people who dare speak against the Reformers. You don't do this and get away. You're not under house arrest, but who knows what the future holds?

It all started on June 8, 1995. But if Toni was alone in saying it's a dictatorship, we could say that he has a lot of credibility, but maybe the words were too strong. But not at all. Gary Carr, MPP, member of provincial Parliament, member of the Progressive Conservative Party — you see, there's an alliance here, and I have Toni Skarica as a member of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. But they have an alliance with the Ontario Reform, which is the zeal that occupies those sons and daughters of the Reform policy who occupy the back bench. Together they run the province, together they plan the future of Ontario, but since there are more sons and daughters of Reform, their policies are more numerous than the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario. This is what Gary Carr says, "Mike Harris has got to realize that this is still a democracy, not a dictatorship." That's number two, another one.

Bill Murdoch, MPP, another fine member of Parliament — this is what Mr Murdoch said, the former PA — I mean, they've all lost their jobs, and quick, quick — "You have to be nicey-nicey and kiss...if you want to get ahead." This is what Murdoch says.

That's Toni Skarica out the door, Gary Carr out the door — we don't see you in the corridor any more — and Bill Murdoch followed the other two. But they stood up at great cost. They stood up because they saw the state of siege, they saw what was being done by the gang. They refused to toe the line. My God, what a path. There are ways of doing — you formed a government, Speaker. We had a coalition, an accord, une entente. The government worked quite well. There was always ample opportunity to debate.

1800

But when you go this far in changing the rules, when you use every trick in the book to silence the opposition,

you should be able to come up with some rationale, some substance. Name me one piece of legislation, one intent of the government that wasn't passed. We all know that at the end of the day the majority shall have its way. A long-established tradition — we have 130 members at present and the Conservative government has 82. When things don't always go well — they're still getting things passed — then you blame the opposition and you shove these new rules down their throats. What kind of a world would they wish? That there would be no opposition?

Every minister would just have to get up and say, "This is it." You'd have the tuna man one day saying, "Ninety dollars a month, you can feed yourself on that." The next day you'd have the one-armed bandit saying more VLTs, the crack cocaine of gambling, and the money kept rolling in, never enough, but don't oppose it. Don't talk about the soul of the community. Don't talk about those who are marginalized and certainly do not mention the poor. Don't do that. Because, you see, they're not here for the poor. They're here for the tax break that mainly benefits the rich. They're here to give everything to some entrepreneurs.

I can assure you, Mr Speaker, it's not the manner of humanity that one would wish to court, to attract. Yet in real life, because the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is not everything, what to do after hours? June 16, 1997, one of them issues a memorandum to the Progressive Conservatives, to the government members, "With deep regret we are forced to postpone the cigar night at the Albany Club tonight." There are 21.6% welfare recipients, more than half of them are little ones, they're children. You turn the page and then you inform your colleagues with deep regret that the cigar night at the Albany Club has been postponed.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr Pouliot:** Talk to me about the breakfast prayer meeting. Yes, it loses an awful lot of its significance and sincerity and appeal, doesn't it? Is this family values? Those people who are working for small salaries — because I can't penetrate across, I'll talk right over, I'll talk to them with deep respect — do you know, ladies and gentlemen, about the cigar night at the Albany Club, or are you too busy trying to make ends meet? That's a priority and you're anxious about the many changes that are happening.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** What about stickers on your car that say "Premium fuel only"?

**Mr Pouliot:** Come on, Jane and John, let's sit down for a while, we'll talk about it. You have a right to be anxious because your life will be changing more and more and a lot of the changes will hit you without being aware because the opposition will have been muzzled. The opposition will have no right to question. The opposition will have no right to scrutinize. The opposition will not have an opportunity to inform you nearly as well in the future because, you see, my friends have decreed that the opposition stands in the way of their program, that the train must depart and arrive at the station on time, that the troops must be punctual, that the members of the brigade must be able to deliver the agenda. "Citizens, if you stand in the way, we will shove you aside. You representatives of citizens, if you stand in the way,



we will use our 82-member majority to shackle and to silence and to muzzle you."

The dean of the House, Mr Laughren, the member for Nickel Belt, has been in this House for over a quarter of a century, over 25 years, and he has said to our caucus that he could not have envisaged or ever imagined that under the standing orders we would be visited with a day like today. He could not in his wildest dreams imagine that this depth of change would be imposed on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, on the opposition.

Mr Bradley, the member for St Catharines, the Liberal House leader, has been in this House for over 20 years, two decades. He too echoed the sentiment from the dean, the member for Nickel Belt. They speak with sincerity. They speak with passion on these matters. They know that the fix is in. They know that their rights as members of the assembly, as representatives of people in their constituencies, are being watered down big time.

What's an opposition to do? We're accused of pulling tricks, of using filibusters to delay the will of the day, the will of the government, and yet when we ask the government, "Name one bill that you wished passed that did not; name one instance when at the end of the day, when all was said and done, you did not have your way to a member, to a person," they are incapable of coming up with one example.

This kind of unnecessary draconian legislation will freeze the blood in the veins of any democrat. We will attempt to be imaginative. We can't live with this because it's not commonsensical. It makes little sense for us, and we refuse to die on our knees in the context of serving the public.

If we can't fight the good fight this way, we will fight the guerilla fight, whichever way it takes, because we can't live with it, and by way of a challenge to the government, we're not about to go away. We will be here at our posts doing whatever we can. We will mobilize outside. We'll meet the people in their homes, on the streets and point the finger right at Queen's Park.

**1810**

C'est là que tout a commencé, Monsieur. That's where it all began. Vous savez, les gens viendront du nord, du sud-ouest, du sud-est, du plus petit village, du plus grand centre, et cette caravane formera la vraie opposition.

Vous savez, si on est pauvre, et si nous sommes membres de la classe moyenne, avec ces gens, on parle peu. Avec ces gens on a peur. Mais chose certaine, avec eux on paie. On paie aujourd'hui, on paie demain, on paie pour toujours, aux bénéfices de cette classe dans la société, cette classe des richards, des gens qui en ont plus, des mieux-nantis, de ceux qui sont plus forts, plus aptes à attaquer, plus aptes à se défendre, ces gens qui peuvent payer avec les dollars des autres dans certains cas : des gagnants, des gagnants de ce gouvernement. Mais pour les autres, pour la masse, la majorité des gens, il faut une opposition, une opposition forte qui puisse énoncer les besoins de la majorité des Ontariens et Ontariennes. On ne demande que ça, pas plus, mais jamais moins que ça.

En ces jours d'attente — puisque c'est d'ici à la fin de semaine, jeudi ou vendredi, que le projet de loi deviendra la loi — et pour les années à suivre, la démocratie aura

été victime d'un affront. La représentation que l'on avait toujours pris pour acquis, sur laquelle on pouvait toujours compter, va commencer à mourir un peu. Elle a été affaiblie parce que, encore une fois systématiquement, encore une fois délibérément, la majorité des 82 membres du gouvernement a choisi d'écraser, de noyer les voix de l'opposition.

I would like to close, since we're running out of time, by the quote that started this debate: The poor object to being governed badly; the rich object to being governed at all. You have chosen not to be governed at all, and we are the victims.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Mr Baird:** I always enjoy hearing my colleague the member for Lac-Nipigon give a speech. The answer to the question he asked so many times throughout his remarks is to name one bill. I would, and it would be Bill 33.

I'd like to comment on the amendments that were presented by the government earlier today. The amendments tried to deal with some of the concern members have expressed in this place and outside of this place, concerns that were brought forward on the government's amendment to the standing orders.

The first one was with respect to the provisions that would allow the House to sit from 6:30 until 9:30. There were some who said that just allowing that to take place without any notice was unfair, and I was pleased to see that there was an amendment proposed earlier today that would allow such a provision, requiring notice to be placed on the order paper the week before so that people would know that there was a desire to sit on a Tuesday night or a Wednesday night or the Monday night or the Thursday night, what have you. That notice would be required the week before. That was an amendment that was made.

There was also a good amount of concern brought forward in the public that somehow these changes to the standing orders would allow the government, as I heard a member of this place say on one occasion, to pass a bill in two days. I found that quite disturbing because no one in this place believes a piece of legislation, unless it has got such broad support that there is unanimous consent in this chamber, should be passed in two days. You couldn't do it in two days. No one was proposing it could be done in two days. In fact, it had never been done in two days. I think it was self-evident that that was the case.

What would be required today, and I think it's important to put this on the record, for a bill, lightning speed, if someone wanted to go quickly — I checked, and I can't find a time since my time in this place over the last two years where this has actually been employed, where a bill has ever gone this fast or nearly this fast, but if it were to go at rocket speed today, you would require one day for the bill to be introduced. It would then have to be printed. That could be done in as little as a day or it could be done in two or three days, depending on the printing schedule in this place, but normally it's fairly efficient, I would suggest. The bill would be printed. So there's a minimum of two days before it could even come to second reading. Say it was debated for three days at



second reading. Say time allocation was introduced. There would be a fifth day of debate. That vote on time allocation would have to take place the next day, on the sixth day. We only sit four days a week, so you're well into the second week by this point. You would see debate going to at least six or seven days plus committee. All of the pieces of legislation generally go to committee to invite submissions and amendment.

There was never the intent that a bill could be passed in two days, because you couldn't pass it in two days even with these changes. On this amendment it was so important to be clear and up front that not only was a commitment made that no, there would be no intention that any government would want to consider a piece of legislation in two or three days, but on this issue it was so important we'll wear a belt and suspenders; we'll write it right in the rules that no, you can't do that. In my judgement, that deals with one of the biggest objections that has been made by members opposite to that change to the standing orders, to say that no, under no shape or form would you be able to go any faster on a particular piece of legislation under these standing order changes than you could before they were changed. I think that's something that's very important to put on the record.

My colleague the member for Lake Nipigon, for whom I have great respect, said that the opposition has no right to question the government. I was concerned about that, particularly since I remember when he served this province — very well, I might add — as Minister of Transportation. I looked at the last 12 months under the previous government, under the NDP, and I had my staff do some work with the legislative research service to find out how often the Legislative Assembly of Ontario had sat in the last 12 months. I have the statistics, and I'll give the exact time lines and dates.

Between June 24, 1994, and June 24, 1995, a 12-month period, the Legislative Assembly didn't sit at all at the end of June, didn't sit at all in July, didn't sit at all in August, didn't sit at all in September, sat one day in October. It sat in the month of November, and it sat for nine days in December. After December 9 it didn't sit.

I said, "Okay, could I get the figures for 1995?" It didn't sit in January 1995, didn't sit in February 1995, didn't sit in March 1995, didn't sit in April 1995. I said: "Well, isn't it funny? The House is supposed to come back in March." It didn't sit, didn't come back.

The ability that my colleague the member for Lake Nipigon spoke of, the opposition's ability to question the government, the most fundamental accountability in this place, probably the most important function of this place, where the government of the day, of all political stripes, is held accountable, there was no option to do that. There was no option to hold the government accountable, because this place didn't sit.

Not was question period going to be delayed two or three minutes, not was question period going to be shorter, as it is in Ottawa in the House of Commons, as it is out west in British Columbia and Saskatchewan or in many provinces across the country; the House didn't sit at all. There was no question period whatsoever, no opportunity for the government of the day to be held accountable in this place.

I did think that was worth repeating when my colleague the member for Lake Nipigon brought up the issue of the opposition's right to question the government. In Ontario, we have substantial occasion for the opposition of the day and indeed for government backbenchers, as I regularly try to, to hold the government accountable in question period in this House. That is something that is important, and no provision whatsoever in the amendments or the original motion seeks to change that. I think that's very important to get on the record.

#### 1820

Another change that was brought forward was to decrease the amount of time that the government could reply to petitions and standing order questions. There was some concern suggested that 45 days was too long. We'll cut it just about in half and go to 24 days to meet those concerns. People brought the concern up; the government listened and earlier today amended its motion. That's very important.

There was another change to the standing orders, an amendment that was raised earlier: Someone expressed that a 15-minute bell taken out of the time of the day would see the opposition and the House collectively — just as much on the government side — lose potentially 10 or 15 minutes of debate. No problem. The government sought to amend the standing orders not once, twice or three times, but four times to deal with that concern. It was a fair and reasonable request that some members raised in debate in this place. The government listened and the government acted.

I look as well to another change. There was a concern expressed by many on all sides of this House: Should there be a vote on first reading? I want to put on the record why I thought every member of this place should have the right to introduce a bill. This is something that I would indicate to the House has been used by all parties, so there's no innocent party in this, politically speaking.

Does a member have a right to introduce a bill, to have it printed, to have it distributed and to have it debated before there's a vote? Right now, under the current provisions, a member can vote against a private member's bill or a government bill without ever having read it, without it having been printed, without it having been distributed. This has been used by all parties and there's no party without guilt on this issue. I think that's wrong. Every member of this place should have the right to introduce a bill and have it considered by their colleagues, to have it printed and distributed, not just to members in this place but to our constituents through an extensive network of libraries and through the Internet.

There was a concern raised —

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Point of order, Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum. Would you please have that checked.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Nepean.



**Mr Baird:** As I was saying, there was some concern with respect to the provision for introduction of legislation, that a vote should be held. Some people, I can indicate to you, felt quite strongly on this issue that this was an inherent right. It isn't, in my judgement, abused a lot. It's a principle I felt strongly about, but again the government listened and amended the motion to reflect what it had heard, to reflect the debate that was brought forward, not just in this place by parliamentarians like the well-spoken member for Kingston and The Islands and others in the New Democratic Party; others outside this place raised the concern. There's an amendment to deal with that concern. Again, the government listened and then made an amendment acting on that listening. That's something that's important to note.

It also noted that a time allocation motion may not be moved on the same calendar day as any bill that is subject to a motion which has been called as a government order — another concession. We listened and made a change. I think that's very important.

They increased the amount of time for debate on the budget. One of the things I brought to this issue that I felt quite strongly about is that there is no requirement in Ontario to vote on a budget. I looked at all three parties. Not to be self-righteous, all three parties over the last 10 years have not always held votes on the budget. In fact, in the last 10 years — you can look at the statistics — the Ontario Legislature has only voted on the budget three of the last 10 times. It was interesting that 70% of the time there was no vote on the budget. I think people expect their members of provincial Parliament to come to Queen's Park and hold the government of the day accountable for the budgetary policy.

As I previously mentioned, I looked at what John Nunziata was able to do, as one member of Parliament, to hold his government accountable directly through the budget vote. He was able to vote against the budget, to send a message to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and the Liberal government, "We promised to scrap and abolish the GST." He said to the Prime Minister, "Sir, you said on CBC Television that it would be irresponsible to promise to abolish the GST unless you had a specific plan to replace it," and he voted against the budget. Within two weeks, the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, the second-most-powerful person in the country, had to resign over that issue. Talk about accountability. I think Ontario was lucky to have John Nunziata in the House of Commons standing up for Ontario's interests. That's something that is important.

This amendment would allow four days, an extra day of debate: more debate, more democracy, more accountability in this place. The government listened and added an extra day of debate. I think that's a good and worthwhile initiative.

With respect to the amount of time for order paper questions, I covered that at the same time as I covered questions. They increase the number of order paper questions by 250%, allow members to put more questions on the order paper. That would be 250% greater than the House of Commons in Ottawa, which is the model they had adopted. This is to stop members of provincial Parliament from tabling 400 or 500 questions. Hard-

working public servants have to work till midnight for two or three months just to answer all the order paper questions, and you've got to seriously wonder whether 400 or 500 order paper questions put on the same day are important to deal with. This will realize a reasonable standard, 250% greater than the House of Commons. That's something that I think is important.

These changes with the amendments will allow for even more debate. They will allow more members to have the opportunity to participate. I know that members of the public from all over Ontario, regardless of their political stripe, watch the legislative channel. They tune in and want to see their provincial member of Parliament talking about the issues of concern to them. I have heard a number of my constituents say, "I tune in to the same four or five people talking all the time," and I know there are hardworking people up in Sudbury who want to turn on the television and see their member of provincial Parliament debating the salient political issues of the day more often. As a fellow backbencher, that member for Sudbury will have more opportunity to rise and speak and put the concerns of his constituents on the record. I think that is a fantastic event. And do you know what? All the government backbenchers will have the opportunity to benefit from the wisdom of my good friend the member for Sudbury, and we look forward to that.

More debate, more democracy: This will allow for more people to participate, a more egalitarian approach among members of provincial Parliament. You won't have simply my good friends in cabinet. They won't have 90 minutes to speak any more. The backbenchers want more time. We want more time to speak. The ministers and the front bench of the opposition, the opposition leaders, the opposition House leaders, can speak for 90 minutes on just about any bill they like. What we want is more backbenchers to have a greater role and a greater say: more democracy, more debate. These democratic reforms will allow that. They also allow for independent members to have a greater say around here.

Mr North, the member for Elgin, came forward with some ideas. He had a report. After we washed off the dust that had been gathering on it for the four years since it had been written, we read it, and we said: "Listen, these are all reasonable amendments. Should not an independent member, particularly an elected independent member, have the right to sit on a committee? Shouldn't an independent member have the right to ask questions?"

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** Sure.

**Mr Baird:** The member for Timiskaming says, "Sure." I'm pleased to see that he supports that initiative.

Shouldn't they have the right to ask questions? The member for Elgin found out that some Speakers would allow him to ask questions, some Speakers wouldn't allow him to ask questions. He shouldn't be beholden to the Speaker of the day. He should have a right to get up and ask questions. He should have a right to make statements in the Ontario Legislature. He should have a right to sit on committees. He should have a right to participate in private members' hour on Thursdays, I would submit. These changes do just that.

1830

Many of the reforms contained in the motion come directly from the House of Commons in Ottawa, one of



the most democratic institutions in the world. Being the member from the riding of Nepean, outside the city of Ottawa, every summer parliamentarians from all over the Commonwealth, from all over la francophonie, from all over the United Nations member countries come to Ottawa to look at our Parliament because they say it's one of the most democratic institutions in the world. It's certainly the mother Parliament for the Ontario Legislature.

I looked in the standing orders, and standing order 1(b) says that the Speaker may use "precedents of the Legislature and parliamentary tradition," and of course what is a bigger Parliament than the Ontario Legislature in this country but the federal House of Commons? Many of the changes simply look at what they employ in that most democratic institution — that's important to mention — and as well draw on the strengths of other legislatures. I think that is very important.

When I looked at potentials for standing orders, I did a lot of reading. Again, I want to give credit where credit is due. I found a good amount of very interesting information from my good friend and colleague the member for Sudbury East, Ms Martel, who on May 28, 1991, released a set of NDP government amendments to others here at Queen's Park on suggested changes. That's where the idea of sitting in the evening first came to me, because the very first amendment she suggested would allow for changes to allow members to sit for two and a half hours in the evening. I wanted three hours, a little bit more time, but that's where I got the idea. When I read this NDP government idea, I checked, and in fact the Ontario Legislature used to sit regularly in the evening.

We employed the idea directly from Ms Martel, the member for Sudbury East, from the NDP government's own proposals. We looked at what they did in other jurisdictions, we looked at what they did in the House of Commons and, most important, we looked at what they did in other Canadian legislatures, particularly in the chamber in British Columbia, and we were able to adopt those successes.

I looked very particularly at how the standing order changes were used the last time. How did it shape out and pan out the last time? A motion was tabled here at Queen's Park and negotiations between the three government House leaders took place. Of course, on this even the Toronto Star has given the government some credit while taking issue with a good number of the concerns. A report was released publicly in Ontario, sent to all members here at Queen's Park, and it said, "Give us your concerns, give us your issues."

Something to note is that every opposition idea that came forward was adopted. Mr North brought forward a good number of amendments and we took them all — because they were all good, we listened — as well as presenting these amendments today.

I wondered, how did it pan out? What was the conclusion of those deliberations? I looked at Hansard, page 1770, on the division on changes to the standing orders. It's very interesting: The names Bisson, Christopherson, Lankin, Martel, Marchese, Martin, Pouliot, Silipo, Wildman and Wood all stand in the ayes column. I checked, and this was the standing order change which

brought in time allocation, something that is far more significant than what this government is presenting.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** Shocking. Absolutely shocking.

**Mr Baird:** Shocking, as one of my colleagues from Scarborough has said. Yet you wouldn't see that when you listen to some of the speeches.

One of the most surprising names I see there is Harris. I said, "I didn't know there were two members named Harris in the last Parliament." I checked and Mike Harris, right here on page 1770, supported the New Democratic Party government when they brought in changes to the standing orders. He worked with the government. He negotiated after it was tabled here in the Legislative Assembly. There was the opportunity to negotiate before for almost two weeks and the opportunity to discuss afterwards.

A good number of these amendments that were presented today by my colleague the member for Mississauga West reflected some — not all, but some — of the concerns that were expressed in the House on Thursday, but also some of the concerns that were expressed by our colleagues here in debate. The government has been listening and acting; more debate and more democracy again, and that is something important to note.

To conclude, I would like to make reference to my colleague the member for Ottawa Centre, who is a good friend, in terms of representations of statements I made on this issue. I recognize that all members of this place work extremely hard. They work hard here at Queen's Park and they work hard going back and forth to their constituencies every week. I look across the aisle and I see a good number of members from northern Ontario and southwestern Ontario. I drive five, five and a half hours a week each way to get here. There is a good number of people. They work hard in their ridings, they work hard on committees, they work hard on caucus committees, they work hard on cabinet committees, they work hard working at their community, they work hard on their private members' bills, they work hard on a good amount of legislation.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum. Would you check?

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check for a quorum, please.

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Nepean.

**Mr Baird:** As I was saying, people are working hard whether they're here or not. It was an interesting time to make that note. I certainly made that very clear throughout my entire report. Members work hard when they're not in this place. Members work hard when they're in their constituencies; members work hard on caucus committees and in legislative committees. By no means would I suggest that they didn't. I made that very clear in my report, I made that very clear in my remarks when I released the report and I made it very clear when I spoke on the main motion to this issue. It does cause me



concern that someone would try to suggest that was not the case.

What I do believe to be absolutely ridiculous is that we in this House could spend two days debating whether we should work an extra four days. It's almost like taking four steps forward and two steps back. There was a motion put forward by the government House leader to say, "Instead of breaking on December 13, we should sit until December 19 and come back in the month of January." I think it's ridiculous to spend hours and hours and even days debating whether we should work longer. We should decide that we're either going to work longer or we're not, and that should not be a long debate. It should be a quick decision. Do you want to work longer or do you want to maintain the existing parliamentary calendar? It's not a big decision, in my judgement. People in my constituency don't have the option to debate for two days whether they'd like to change their work schedule. You either agree or you don't agree and get on with it. Allow for more debate on legislation: more debate, more democracy. That certainly is the basis for this amendment.

To conclude, I would simply suggest that the amendments presented today by the government are reasonable. They reflect the listening that has been going on. They reflect the concerns that members on all sides of this House suggest. A good number of members came forward with some positive suggestions, some concerns they had. The government not only listened but they tried to genuinely understand what those concerns were. They listened and then they amended, allowing for more debate, allowing for more democracy.

I am very pleased. I think this motion is better with the amendments and merits support from members on all sides of the House.

1840

**Mr Ramsay:** In one way I guess I'm pleased to stand in my place tonight and speak to this, but when I look at the outstanding business of this Legislative Assembly before us and knowing that we really only have, after today, three more legislative days before the partial summer break, I'm surprised we're spending so much time on rule changes when we could be getting on with I would say more important parts of the public agenda.

It's interesting, Mr Speaker, and I think you were here last Thursday, that there can be a very cooperative attitude in this place. Last Thursday night we gave second and third reading to Bill 127, the nurse practitioners' act, which happened very quickly, and we gave second reading to the Community Safety Act and sent that on to committee. That will probably be dealt with this summer. That was just in one evening.

Before the government still is the red tape bill, the Development Charges Act; we still have to get to third reading of the Community Safety Act; there's a Provincial Offences Act, a public libraries act that's very important. There are some child support guidelines. A very, very important bill is the road safety bill we have to deal with that primarily deals with trucking, school buses and of course the flying tires that are a chronic problem in this province. There are many bills that need to be dealt with, yet this government sees fit to come forward again with more debate on this motion.

Why I feel a bit resentful about having to spend this time on this, besides all the other business we could be doing, is that the government is not even adhering to its own rules. Mr Speaker, you will remember that during question period our House leader, the Liberal House leader, the member for St Catharines, was very exercised, as he should have been, about our lack of knowledge about what business would be debated today after question period, especially when the opposition parties gave unanimous consent to the government because of the funeral of the late Larry Grossman, a previous leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. That was the right thing to do.

Members from all sides of this House wanted to attend that funeral, yet we weren't given notice as to what would be the orders of the day so we could plan as an opposition party who should be here and who would be able to go to the funeral this afternoon. It's important for opposition parties to be able to notify their specific critics of the different ministries to be on hand when certain bills are being debated so those critics can prepare their speeches before the House, so they can bring forward the most salient points in regard to the legislation to be debated.

That's how you get constructive debate, that's how you get positive debate: when you have well-informed opposition critics bringing forward points that hopefully the government would consider and maybe reconsider, and through that process, as has happened with many, many bills, bring forward amendments so we can improve upon the government's legislation.

I don't think there's anybody in this province who believes that any one of the parties represented here has exclusivity on all the right answers. We're all here to —

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum again.

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Call in the members; there will be a bell up to five minutes.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** Mr Speaker, a quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** Not any one of us here in this Legislature has a monopoly on all the right answers to the many challenges that are facing this province in the year 1997. So through our processes of debate of our bills, committee hearings where we hear public comment, then clause-by-clause either in committee or through committee of the whole of this House, we sometimes come together with some of the ideas and the government responds from time to time and listens to comments from the opposition or comments from the public that come through these various venues. These opportunities are the way our democracy works.

In fact, when you talk to people, and surely this is the government's line, many feel that this Legislature should work more like a business just like many people feel that government should work more like a business. I could certainly be very sympathetic to say that the actions of government should be more businesslike, and over the



last few years I think we've all striven to do that and this government is continuing that.

But the Legislative Assembly is a very different institution and I don't believe it should operate as a boardroom of a major corporation. That operation is very different. A boardroom of a corporation and its board members around the table basically are of the same ilk. They are run by the same mission statement. They are headed in the same direction. They know there is work to be done in that company and they have a certain agreement as to how that should be done. In their discussions they're fine-tuning how that should be done and when it should be done.

The Legislative Assembly is a very different creature, and while many may feel that the debates that go on in here and the institution itself may be to some degree kind of antiquated, I'm sure many people look upon this place and the goings-on here as almost a museum piece, if you will. They look to us like through a piece of glass at the Royal Ontario Museum as somehow something from antiquity. But the roots of what we do here and the day-to-day to-and-fro action are a very important functioning of our democracy because all of us in society have differences of opinions as to how our government should function.

It's only through this organized procedure of debate, through our Legislative Assembly, through duly elected members, that we're able really to in a very peaceful way work out our differences. That takes time and it's not very efficient. I'm sure there are many more efficient mechanisms for running a country, but I've seen those examples around the world, both on the extreme right wing and the extreme left wing, and they don't afford the freedom to their citizens that a parliamentary democracy does.

While I'll say to my constituents and many of the people watching here this evening that in a way I'm sympathetic to saying that it would be nice to see democracy more efficient, I don't think you can run a debating institution such as the Ontario Legislature in a much more efficient manner than it runs today.

That's the cost of making sure everybody gets heard, that this small voice, whether it be from a minority group or somebody in a far-off region of this vast province, gets heard. That's what's really important about this place, not that the majority always has its will.

Political scientists will say that a democracy is not about the tyranny of the majority, that while we order ourselves in an election and the majority wins and the party with the largest number of seats forms the government, it is still always very important in a democratic society that the minority be heard, and not only that the minority be heard but from time to time be listened to and their views incorporated in the government of the day's legislation.

1850

There certainly are examples of that. A bill I was working on the last seven months with the Solicitor General was Bill 84, which was an omnibus bill that brought together nine separate old acts that involved fire protection and prevention in this province. This sort of legislation was long overdue and very necessary. Much

of the legislation was antiquated and out of date and needed to be brought into the 21st century for sure.

But the trouble with the government starting off with this bill was that it didn't consult on many of the major labour relations aspects to this bill. Regardless of that, they brought forward the bill without that initial consultation with these groups. Firefighters especially and many of the people who understood the importance of how fire services operate in our municipalities were very concerned about the way the government had approached this.

But the bill was introduced on October 16, 1996, and it was only passed last month. In the seven months between first reading and the final passage, there was opportunity, through debate in this House, committee hearings, committee clause-by-clause and third reading debate in this House, for the government to have some time to listen to what many in the public and the people directly involved — in this case firefighters — had to say about Bill 84.

I asked the Solicitor General on Thursday of last week about that: While yes, it took him seven months to get his legislation through, he was able to listen on some of those points, he did adopt some of the suggestions that the public and the opposition had made. In the end, through seven months of work with the opposition and the public, didn't he feel it was a better bill in the end?

He was smiling as he stood up to answer the question, because he knew that I had built a little box for him, that it was a little trap I had set for him, that he really couldn't argue that it was a better bill, and it was a better bill because he allowed the time for all the participants to participate in the process, to put their ideas forward, and in the end it was certainly a better bill than what was first introduced on October 16, 1996.

That's what a lot of the opposition challenge to these rule changes is about, to say that because no one party, no one group of people has a monopoly on all the best ideas and no one government, with the haste this government moves forward on, can be a most efficient and correct government with correct policies all the time, with the speed they're pursuing, you need to take some time. You need to put out an idea. If there's a bill you feel is required by the people of Ontario, then you need a bit of time once you put that out. You need a bit of time for the opposition to analyse it, for the general public to digest it, for all of us to mull it over, to think about it and to hopefully come up with some suggestions that would make it better. That takes time and you can't do that in three days.

What we have proposed before us today in this resolution sponsored by the government is —

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Timiskaming has a lot of very important things to put on the record here this afternoon and I don't think we have quorum to hear it.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll check. Could you check to see if there is a quorum present.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.



**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Timiskaming.

**Mr Ramsay:** I said earlier that I really felt a bit resentful that we are taking up so much of House's time to discuss what I think is in a way kind of an internal matter in that we're talking about the procedures of how this House works. Why I say that is because I feel the time in this House is really the people's time. It is extremely valuable time and should be spent exclusively on issues that directly affect the people we represent.

While the procedures and the mechanisms of how this House operates are important to us, and indirectly to the people of Ontario, because it's important that we, to our best ability, can represent the people of Ontario through the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, this Legislature, I feel that this sort of housekeeping — internal rules and procedures — should be worked out between House leaders and only presented in the House once agreement has been set. That way we would not be taking up time where we could be debating many of the very important bills that are before us and many of the matters that deserve the public's attention and deserve public debate through this Legislative Assembly.

Part of my concern about what we're doing here has got to do with the process. As our House leader, the member for St Catharines, had stated earlier, the process of this particular resolution, which is really a whole new set of operating procedures for this House, from the very beginning has been suspect, suspect because it was on the federal election day that the member for Nepean held a press conference in the morning in this place, when basically the world was not focused on this place — if it ever is; it certainly wasn't on that day, the day of the federal election — and announced that he had some alternatives as to how this House should operate.

Many of us in this place were also suspicious that it wasn't just an initiative of the member of Nepean. The opposition had challenged the government's authority through a couple of pieces of legislation in April and the government was angry at the opposition. The Premier's office staff and the House leader's office staff on the government side had taken a look at the rules of this place and had set out changes they felt were necessary for this government to expedite their extremely ambitious agenda.

Today, as I mentioned earlier, again on a day when a lot of members wish to be elsewhere than this place, we did not know what the agenda was before us until near the end of question period when many people had made a commitment to be elsewhere. The government placed before us that today was the day to be discussing rules procedures.

It's not only that aspect of the process that I find distasteful, but also that really the government decided that not only were these ideas the suggestion from the member for Nepean but now they became formalized in a resolution placed forward by the government to be debated in this House and to be passed, ie, shoved down the throats of the opposition and therefore the people of Ontario, and that's what's happening now.

That's not the way to build cooperation, to build bridges between the government members and the

opposition, because I would say that if you canvassed every member of this Legislature, regardless of party affiliation, every one of us would have some ideas about how this place could work better, how this place could be more responsive to the people of Ontario, how it could be run more efficiently with a bit of give and take.

But when governments try to shut up opposition voices, then oppositions raise their hackles. They get upset. It's not because it's my rights that necessarily are being impinged upon or restricted by these rules. When you restrict the operating procedures of how the opposition can bring forward their views through this chamber, you are restricting the rights of men and women across this province to voice their dissent to what the government's doing.

**1900**

As I said earlier, what keeps democracy viable in this country is our profound respect for how the democratic system works. Regardless of who wins an election, regardless of how much we dislike the policies, say, of another political party, once that election is over we all respect the fact that the people of Ontario have spoken. In the last 10 years, the people of Ontario have placed each of the three parties represented in the Ontario Legislature into a position of being their government. Each time, each of the two opposition parties accepted what the people of Ontario had said, that it is this party's time and turn to be the government of Ontario.

We respect that, and we respect that the Progressive Conservative Party won the 1995 election. They have the right to govern for five years and they have the right to bring forward their agenda, but as part of Her Majesty's loyal opposition I have the right and, more so, I have the duty to bring forward the dissenting view of probably 60% of the people of this province who don't necessarily agree all the time with what this government is doing. It's an important function of this chamber that this debate be held on a daily basis so that the people of Ontario can be assured that the government is not on some runaway train shoving their agenda down the throats of the people of Ontario.

That brings me to another matter that's of grave concern to the opposition, and that is one of the main mechanisms that we in opposition use to keep the government accountable on a day-to-day basis. That's question period. In fact, a lot of people probably believe that question period is most of what we do in this place because it's the most highly publicized. It's the most provocative exercise that takes place in this House. It's the most challenging, it's the most aggressive, if you will, because it is a to and fro between opposition and government. It's called question period but it's kind of attack and counter-attack, and it's the opposition in a sense focusing attacks on certain aspects of what government is doing on a day-to-day basis, challenging the policy development of the government. That's what keeps the government honest, that's what keeps the government in check, when an opposition can stand in its place on a daily basis for each sessional day and challenge what the government's doing.

I've been on the other side. I've been a minister in a government and I know the challenges. When you're a minister, you don't really like it, you don't really want to



have to come in here day in and day out and face the challenging of the opposition. But as a minister of the government of the day, of the executive council of a government, you know that's your role, that's your job. Your job is to represent the government and to be accountable to the people of Ontario through the mechanism of question period. That's how it works and that's what it's all about and that's what makes this place important in the end to all the people of Ontario, whether they focus in on it on a day-to-day basis or just watch clips off the nightly news occasionally. That's what keeps this place functioning and viable and real, because what goes on here is real.

It's a dispute resolution mechanism, if you will. This is where we resolve our disputes. We don't do it in the most efficient way. Sometimes it takes members a lot of time to bring their points forward, and yes, when you have a major piece of legislation like a Bill 26 or an omnibus bill like Bill 84 for firefighters, a critic, who has to be highly focused and knowledgeable about that piece of legislation — and some of these pieces of legislation are 30, 40, 50, 60 pages in length — requires a 90-minute leadoff speech to do a proper analysis of an in-depth piece of legislation that comes before this House.

But in these rules the government is trying to circumvent that. They're trying to shorten the length of these speeches. It's important that the critic — and it's only the critics and the minister who presents the bill through the House — has that opportunity for an hour and a half to speak to that bill, to do the in-depth analysis that will explain to the general public, who certainly don't have the time or the access to these pieces of legislation, to go through it.

That's part of my job: It's to be an interpreter, if you will. It's to interpret what's in this big, thick piece of legislation, to highlight the main, salient points, so that we can get those points out through the media to the public, so that we can alert them as to what the government is trying to do in a piece of legislation. Any attempt to stifle that is just going to be a recipe for disaster, because the opposition is going to try to find other methods to obstruct if they don't feel there is a constructive way of bringing forward their view. In fact, I wish we would go all the way back to the way the rules were when we were in government in the late 1980s.

I remember the member for Welland-Thorold holding an old-fashioned filibuster on the issue of auto insurance. He spoke through the night, but adhering to the rules of this place, he had to speak to the issue of the day. On the issue of auto insurance he felt passionately that the government was not on the right track. He had a different view and he had the opportunity to bring that view forward through the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, speaking to that issue and speaking as long as he could, until he was exhausted, maybe the issue was exhausted and certainly the people he represented felt that through all that exhaustion those points of view had been brought forward, that they had seen the light of day and that they had been noticed, and possibly through that, showing the great determination that in that case that particular member had, maybe they would change their minds in some aspect, as often as not does happen in this place,

and the government bring in amendments that would go partway to satisfy what other people, the opposition, are saying about a particular piece of legislation.

I think that's when this House works very well, when the legislative schedule just doesn't end at the end of the day, at 6 of the clock, as the Speaker says, but sometimes goes on. I have no disagreement with going on. In fact, the rule changes talk about, when we have debates like that, of getting into a second sessional day at 6 o'clock at night, like we're doing now, and going in this case, with the regular rules, to 9:30 at night. I don't disagree with that either, except you're getting in another day without the accountability of question period.

So what we propose back to the government is, if you want more debating time, that's fine, but always couple that with the accountability mechanism of question period. That would satisfy us, that would be very important, because all of us would get the opportunity in the debating time to bring forward points, but also the opposition would have the opportunity to keep going with question period, to bring forward another set of inquiries as to what is going on in the government's agenda. We think that would be very constructive for this place.

It would be very constructive for the government, so the government would be kept accountable, that they could hold their heads up high and say: "This is why we're doing this particular initiative. We believe strongly in this and it's going to help this group of people out there." In government that should be their job, and it should be our job to point out to people that we disagree with that particular aspect and that we think you should be doing things differently. From time to time, yes, even the opposition is constructive and puts forward its own ideas for the government to look at. All that happens in the workings of this House and is a very important aspect of how this House works.

It's not a helpful aspect for this House to have any member put forward a wholesale set of rule changes that have not been discussed by the various House leaders, that don't have any sort of consensus or agreement among members of this House, and through resolution put to this place with the strength of a majority government and shoved down the throats of the opposition and therefore shoved down the throats of the dissenting view in the province of Ontario, the people out there who maybe don't agree with what is happening with this government.

#### 1910

These are some of the concerns we have. They're major, major concerns. Just being able to take this time away from what we really should be debating, the bills that are still before us that are of grave public concern. The state of our health care system today, the whole restructuring issue and how this government is putting the cart before the horse in closing up the hospitals before we put the community health care facilities in place, those are the issues we should be talking about, the issues such as finally got resolved by the government, with the drug plan where seniors are being ripped off for three and a half months when they'd already paid for a full year. Finally, it was through the opposition actions that we were able to get those things changed.



This place does work. In fact, I challenge anybody in the government or in this province to tell us how this government is being slowed down. Nobody in this province is saying, "The Harris government is moving too slowly." Nobody's saying that. If anything, their supporters are saying, "They're doing just fine," and a lot of people, probably the majority by now, are saying, "These guys are going too fast." Yet this government wants to slap down a bunch of rule changes that are going to expedite even faster the type of legislation they're bringing forward.

Our concern is that many, many more mistakes are going to be made because we will no longer have the time to reflect on what's going on, to do the critical analysis for the members, for our research staff and for the general public to really take a close critical analysis of the pieces of legislation. The breadth of this agenda and the ambition of this agenda of this government to set into motion a set of rule changes that will act as a catalyst to move along at a much faster rate the changes they're bringing forward I think would have tragic consequences for Ontario.

These rule changes will now set in motion, starting probably by Thursday, because that will probably be the first day when the new rules will take effect, and coming back here on August 18 through the summer into next fall and into the next spring session, will now start as a snowball rolling down a hill and building momentum and building speed and more and more pieces of legislation at a faster and faster rate with a greater and greater momentum are going to come colliding down that hill, in the end crashing at the bottom of that hill in very tragic consequences for Ontario.

I would just like to use my very last few seconds to plead with this government to reconsider this package of rule changes. Tell me where you've been denied passage of any piece of legislation. You may have been delayed, but you haven't been denied. Please defend democracy in this province.

**Mr Martin:** I read from the CCPA Monitor where it says:

"So many Canadians have fallen into poverty in recent years that their number — 5,100,000 — is now the highest it has been since the 1981-82 recession, according to a recent report by the National Council of Welfare.

"Calling the number 'shockingly high,' council chair Lucie Blais traced the sharp rise in poverty to the persistently high unemployment rate and to the deep cuts in social program spending by all levels of government.

"She said that children across Canada have been particularly hard hit, with 20.5% of them now living in poverty, compared with 14.9% in 1980.

"The figures released by the council were for 1995, and Blais predicted that subsequent studies will show that poverty rates will have worsened even more during 1996 and 1997."

I present that to suggest to you that we have in fact a situation in this province and in this country that is worsening by the day; to put it in the context of the discussion we're having here today about the way this place operates, the rules we use to get pieces of legislation a particular government wants through the House so

that they become the order of the day; and to suggest to you that what is happening in Ontario today to poor people and to children is not in keeping with the best traditions of this province. It's not in keeping with the ability of this province to take care of its own.

The fact is that today in Ontario corporations, some of our biggest corporate citizens, are making historically record high profits while at the same time we are being held up by the United Nations as one of the places in the world that is probably preferred in terms of the business climate. I would suggest it is also, though, more and more becoming a place of poverty for children in particular, and that is very disturbing.

It's the reason that so many of us on this side of the House are rising and speaking with such great concern about the fact that this government is moving very quickly through an agenda of very rapid and major change that they would be in fact thinking of changing the rules so that they could move through their agenda even more quickly than they have been.

There's nobody — and you've heard this said in this place before over the last few days or week while we've debated the change in rules that has been presented to us — in this province I've spoken to back in my own riding or by way of letter or phone call to my office here in Toronto who has said to me that this government is going too slow with its changes. As a matter of fact, most people I talk to today are rather alarmed at the tremendous speed with which this government is moving and the changes they are beginning to experience and see and feel in the communities in which they live.

You may wonder out there, as you listen to this debate, why we on this side of the House are so concerned and why we speak in the way we do. It is precisely tied into the way I started my few thoughts here this afternoon and it's the question of the impact the decisions made by this government are having on the lives of those people in our communities who are most vulnerable and most at risk.

That doesn't happen if we do things in an intelligent, thoughtful, well-thought-out and timely manner. If, as has been the tradition of this place, we take our time with legislation, we respect and make use of the institutions that have been put in place here in this House and in parliamentary democracies across the world, we do not end up with at the end of the day, as experience has showed us as life evolves, with a small group of people as the haves and an ever-growing larger group of people becoming more and more the have-nots.

As a matter of fact, in my mind government is about producing a civilized and inclusive society that in particular looks after those who are on the margins in a very focused and hopefully meaningful way. When you have governments in a big hurry, when you have governments that are driven ideologically to put in place an agenda that is not from the people but is coming from someplace else, is somebody else's view of how life should be for all of us, then you end up, as I said before, with a situation where we are seen by many around the world as a community of people, as a place that is envied in terms of living and yet at the same time we know by the figures that are beginning to come out and recognized by groups, such as Amnesty International, that we have problems, that problems are arising, that all is not well.



Child poverty: I spoke to that and we'll hear more about that as life goes on.

We're not doing very well in the area of protecting the environment, and that been noted by some world-class organizations.

Our attitude towards our native people: Amnesty International just last week brought out a report that was very critical of the way we deal with our native people, and I think we have to listen to that. We have to look at that because it's telling us something. It runs up a red flag for us. It says to us that we're doing something that isn't in the best interests of everybody who calls Ontario home. We're doing something as a government that is somehow missing some people, that is not bringing everybody on board and bringing them along, that is not creating that civilized and inclusive society that I think all of us who are reasonable and thinking at least want for our friends, neighbours and family members. When those red flags go up and we begin to see those warning signs that all is not well out there, that a government is moving ahead holus-bolus, willy-nilly with an agenda that is rather startling in nature, frightening some people, hurting many others, I think we have to step back for a second, take a deep breath and wonder what is going on.

1920

When you look at that and you see how that is impacting on people and begin to realize how destructive that can be, I think it behooves all of us to be concerned when the government arrives in this place one day with a package of legislation that is changing the way we operate here so that we can move through this agenda even faster than we have up to that point.

You may have listened to the members across the way as they stood in their places and told you that this really isn't changing anything, that the rules they are bringing to this place are very minor housekeeping items. I suggest to you that that is not the fact, because why bring them here in such an all-fired hurry? Why be in such a rush to get them through this place? Why not sit down and negotiate with the opposition in a way that allows for the kind of change that's evolutionary as opposed to revolutionary, the way that other governments have in the past changed the rules when they thought we might be able to work together in a more cooperative and expedient fashion to get things done that need to be done to make life better for all the citizens of this province? Why is it in this instance we're not willing to sit back and take some time and work with and cooperate with each other in a way that at the end of the day sees a change in the rules of this place if that's what we want, if that's what we decide collectively is in the best interests of everybody, that is in fact going to be helpful and allow us to do things that will be in the best interests of all those people we serve?

We're one of the best provinces in a country that is envied by many around the world. Our House leader just brought me a little piece of paper here that says that the motto of this Legislature is "*Audi alteram partem*," which is Latin for "Hear the other party." What's happening here these days is certainly not in the spirit of that motto, and perhaps we should sometimes visit some of those things that we hold up as symbols of who we are together

and how we should be with each other and actually make them the order of the day and a fact of life as we work through these very challenging times.

As I was saying, we in Ontario are very fortunate in that we have a Parliament that normally and generally works in a way that produces legislation that is well thought out and done in an inclusionary fashion, in a way that reaches out to all people and asks them what they think, how they feel about particular pieces of legislation and initiatives, and we end up with what we have. We end up with a standard of living that is for the most part not half bad and which serves many of us well.

However, we see today, with the very narrow and ideologically driven agenda of this government, the beginning of a fraying at the edges of this wonderful society that we have put together over the years. It's important that we remember we got to where we are today by working together, by working cooperatively with the traditions that were put in place by others and recognized and cherished by others over the years. At this point in time, simply because we have a government in power that's in an all-fired hurry to diminish the role of government, that's in an all-fired hurry to take away from those who have achieved some level of dignity over a long period of time that which gives them that dignity and that freedom and that ability to participate in the way that we've seen in the last two years, you begin to question whether we're still on that track.

Our society in Ontario today, for a growing number of people, is becoming less and less the place it used to be, less and less a place that contributes to a quality of life that speaks to all of us feeling comfortable that there will be something there for us, for our children and for our neighbours as life unfolds, whether it be the health care they need when they get sick or the education they need as they learn how to participate, as they gain skills and develop the gifts that they have so that they can become constructive members of our society. That's what we all aspire to here. That's what we want to achieve. That's what we want to work together to ensure everybody has an opportunity to participate in and to have. But if we move too quickly in this very mean-spirited way to change the very foundation upon which that society is built, then I think we do us all a disservice, and most particularly those out there who are most vulnerable and most at risk.

Why change the rules in this place if the agenda of the government is already evolving and rolling out in a way that to so many of us is quick enough as it is? In fact, it is to many rolling out in a fashion that is reckless. That's a word that we've heard a lot lately. It's a word that was shared with me this weekend to describe how the present government in Ontario is dealing with those things that we all know are important to the standard of living and quality of life of each of us and our family members, and yet this government is moving, as they say, with reckless abandon.

It's like those trucks they want to take off the highway that are dangerous and unsafe, wheels flying here and wheels flying there, people ducking, and at the end of the day some even getting killed. The agenda of this government is not unlike that. It's like a truck going down the



401: We're not sure when a tire is going to fly off; we're not sure when somebody is going to get hurt; and we're not sure this government has any real idea of where they are going to end up and what this is all about.

We have to be really careful about that, because when a government gets carried away with its own self-importance, when a government gets carried away with its drive to put in place an agenda that they think is in the best interests of everybody without consulting them, without doing the impact studies that are necessary to find out just how this is all going to play out in both the short term and the long term, those of us who have been charged with leadership and who have some responsibility in that area have to run up the red flags that many of us on this side of the House are doing these days in front of this package of legislation that will change the rules by which we operate here and try to put in place the best of rules and regulations and maintain the best of services and institutions to help the citizens who pay the taxes and call Ontario home and choose to live and to work here.

We recognize that in Ontario today the economy is not in any real disharmony. As a matter of fact, when you read the papers today and the annual reports of many major corporations, we find that the economy in Ontario is doing quite well, making historically record high profits. But we don't seem to be able to find a way to take that prosperity, that wealth that is generated by those corporations, and spread it around so that more of us can take advantage of it and have for ourselves some of the things that are necessary so that we can participate in a more full way in the economy of the province.

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I suggest to you that the reason we're not able to do that is because this government is moving much too quickly to remove some of the fundamental building blocks of the economy and is not giving the kind of leadership they are charged with and that many of us thought they would when they got elected. I know many of the folks back in my community, after the first blush of this new very right-wing Conservative government who spoke in the election campaign about whacking welfare people, about laying off thousands of civil servants, who spoke in the campaign about reducing many of the rules and regulations that protect our environment, after getting through the first blush of that shock and realizing that, "Hey, maybe there is something here to be celebrated in that we now have in control at Queen's Park a group of right-wing business type people who have worked on Bay Street and who understand perhaps more readily than that bunch of New Democrats who were in government for four or five years how the economy should work and would give leadership in that area," sadly have been disappointed.

There is absolutely nothing that has been done in the last two years in this province that indicates that this government is interested in any way in how the economy of this province evolves, is interested in any way in giving leadership and becoming a partner with communities and with small businesses and with working people across this province to improve the lot of everybody. That concerns us. It concerns us that we have a smaller and smaller group of people getting more and more of the

wealth and a larger and larger group of people wondering where they're going to get what they need just to keep body and soul together.

When you get a society that has evolved over a number of years in a way that saw more and more people being able to participate, saw more and more people having the kind of thing that speaks to the quality of life that is recognized by the United Nations when it comes out with those statements that say we are a place that people would like to come and live, when you see that being attacked, when you see that systematically being torn down and diminished and you see people being hurt in that effort, you begin to ask yourself some very important and serious and fundamental questions.

In front of that scenario, that kind of unfolding where people can no longer count on the kind of service they once thought they would get when they went to the hospital for health care when they got sick, when people begin to question whether in fact they'll be able to send their kids to a school that will provide them with the kind of opportunity we've become accustomed to in this province because we're moving more and more towards a situation where those who have will get and those who don't will not, you become alarmed and concerned.

When you see all around you people who have most of their lives invested in their ability to serve people, to work hard, to participate in community in so many ways that so many of our friends and neighbours do, when you see people who have been for a number of years the best of teachers and when you see people in your own community who have worked in the area of social work for a number of years losing their jobs, when you see people who work in health care — nurses, nurse practitioners and people who prepare the food and clean the floor — who have become the best that they can possibly be in those jobs now out of a job and wondering where they're going to work next, how they're going to participate in this new economy that's coming at them, you have to have some real and serious and genuine concerns. You have to be asking yourself what this government is proposing and planning to do. You have to be worried about the agenda as it unfolds.

If it's not making life better for people, if jobs are not being created, if the fundamental building blocks of a civilized society — education, health care, some of the social service safety net features that we've collectively built up for each other over the years — are being attacked and hacked, you begin to ask yourself what it is that a particular government is doing, where it is that the particular government is taking us.

Instead of bringing in rules that govern how we operate here and that will speed up this agenda, will move this agenda even more recklessly through our communities and our towns and villages, one would have to ask: Why that package? Why not a package that would move towards slowing this thing down, that would move towards some of the more valued of the traditions that we've all come to appreciate and participate in here, which is the opportunity for more people to have a say, for more people to be able to vet and look at pieces of legislation as they come at them, for more people to be involved in decisions: decisions, for example, on what



communities they would like to live in, what communities they would like to cooperate with in the large-scale amalgamations that are going on; decisions, for example, on how we govern our schools and how we, as people who are concerned about our schools, continue to have a voice in the day-to-day operation of those schools without inhibiting the ability of principals and teachers to do the very excellent job they've always done and want to continue to do but are today more and more alarmed and concerned and raising red flags about whether they will be able to continue to do in that particular way.

You have to ask yourself, if you're a reasonable person in this province today, why this government that has so recklessly begun to tear away at the fundamental foundation blocks that make Ontario a civilized society would be bringing in and presenting to us here in such a unilateral and non-inclusionary fashion rules that will make it easier for them to move through their agenda and to get more of this kind of very negative, destructive, diminishing, take-away type of legislation in. I would suggest to you that it would be more helpful if we were to bring before the House perhaps a set of rules that would make for more consultation, that would speak more to the essence of the democracy that we've all come to appreciate and to support in Ontario.

I say to you, Speaker, and I ask you in all honesty and sincerity, when you look at what's going on in your community, when I look at what's going on in my community — I ask all the members here to consider what they're hearing from people when they go back to their constituencies on Fridays and on weekends and you get a chance to sit and talk to people and you ask them if everything is well in their life, if everything is well in their family, if there's any hope and vision, if they have an excitement, an enthusiasm, about what they see out there for their young people as they work their way through an education system that becomes ever more costly with each day that goes by. When you ask them if they have any thought at all as to where that young person, once he or she gets through the education process, might work, you begin to understand and feel more deeply than ever before the anxiety that's out there, the angst that's out there, the concern that's out there, the fear that some people are beginning to feel more personally with each day that goes by, and you ask yourself, is that in keeping with the best traditions of this province? Is that part of the evolutionary process that we have the potential to participate in in a province that is as rich as this one?

Is it right that a government should be able to, only two months into its mandate, for example, decide unilaterally that the poorest among us, those who have the least in our communities, those who have the least to spend on food for their children, to pay the rent on the home that they live in, those who have the most difficult time to get around and get a job — is it right that the government should be able to take 21.6% out of their income, away from them, so they can no longer feed their children?

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**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** This government believes the poor have too much money and the rich don't have enough.

**Mr Martin:** This government believes, as my colleague from Algoma says, the poor have too much money and the rich don't have enough, so they're going to go about making sure that that injustice is corrected and that we have a new day in Ontario that will be, yes, good news for those who already have but not such good news for those who are struggling to make ends meet.

It is in that environment, in that atmosphere, that we as members of this place were elected by our communities to come here and speak on their behalf, to make sure that whatever happens at Queen's Park is building on as opposed to tearing down, is contributing to as opposed to taking away, is working towards the common good, the best interests of all as opposed to the interest of a small few corporate elite. That's what we're sent here to speak to and to speak for and to challenge.

At a time when we see out there among the people we work and live with a tremendous angst, a sense of fear in front of the very reckless agenda of this government, we are asked to just sit back and allow them to change the rules so that they can get more of this stuff through ever more quickly, so that they can get their agenda in place, rather than in four or five years, in two or three years, so they can be ready for the next election; no thought at all of the impact this is going to have on the lives of ordinary citizens, no thought at all of the impact this is going to have on families and on communities. I will definitely be voting against these rule changes.

**Mr Bill Vankoughnet (Frontenac-Addington):** I'm pleased to briefly speak on this motion respecting changes to the standing orders governing procedures of this assembly. Since 1979, as a member of a governing party federally, and later as a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, I have witnessed at first hand the frustration of members of both governing and opposition parties. I have taken part in standing orders changes both in the House of Commons and now proposed changes in this Legislature.

Rule changes are always significant. Moving the business of this House forward in a way that respects what is being done in other parliaments is also very important, changes that effect a fair and reasonable balance giving the government a clear means to get on with its business. We have seen tactics which hold the business of this House to ransom, and within reason, at the end of the day, it is the policy and business of any government which is put before the electorate within that five-year period.

It has become fashionable to criticize parliamentarians and Parliament as ineffective and irrelevant, to criticize it as rowdy and unseemly. Motion 24, the standing orders amendments, is an opportunity to assemble a new set of rules which will assist the Legislature to carry out more effectively two of its major functions: legislating and scrutinizing government's performance.

Reform must balance the interests and needs of backbenchers with the legitimate concerns of government and the opposition leadership, to seek to create and respond to each of the major groups within the broader objective of making the Legislature more relevant, effective and efficient.

A moment in politics can be a long time in politics and it can be the beginning or the end of one's political



career. As representatives, members of Parliament spearhead campaigns in the Legislature and on public platforms designed to educate the people about the importance of observing human rights and fundamental freedoms. The role of parliamentarians in this respect is twofold: Parliamentarians must secure fundamental rights and freedoms as well as the responsibilities of the individual by passing laws which are in line with the international covenants, and they must see that these rights are respected by the government through proper parliamentary censure.

If Parliament is to effectively discharge its full duty, it must at the very least supervise each grant of power which it makes with great care and must assume the function not only of passing legislation but also of seeing that legislation is carried out in accordance with parliamentary intent. In the absence of the exercise of this latter function, Parliament will be less effective, for no law is better than its administration. In acceptance of these rules, parliamentary governance should be both transparent and accountable.

We often hear of free votes to deal with such issues as abortion, capital punishment or human rights. What many constituents, and certainly my constituents, have told me over the past two decades when they talk about free votes is that they want more say in the decision-making process. This would give MPs more independence, reducing the focus on executive and leadership and thus balancing the accountability and responsibilities of Parliament.

In order for our system to survive, opposition parties must not be marginalized but rather integrated in the system. Modern parliaments are political battlegrounds where authority of governments and the liberty of people fight for their democratic existence.

Today we tend to take for granted our parliamentary institutions. After the demise of Communism and its dictatorship of the people, campaigns are not so much about ideology but rather on good management. Parliamentary democracy can be improved or updated through trust, honesty in government, transparency and balanced budgets. Bad economic policies are bound to throw governments out. The rule of law has to be maintained. Politicians have to match rhetoric and actions and parliamentary committees should be structured in such a way that they become effective.

Some of the highlights of our changes to the standing orders: The amendments strike a good balance between the rights of members to participate in free, open and thorough debate on issues and legislation and the right of the House to make decisions in a timely manner.

The proposed changes, if passed, will protect the democratic rights of our members: more members will be able to speak in debate; prevents members' bills from being blocked; more time will be provided for private members' bills to be debated; the right of each MPP to propose legislation and have it printed for distribution to other members will be guaranteed.

There will be an increase in accountability and efficiency in the Legislature: guarantees a fixed amount of time to debate the budget; guarantees a budget debate within three weeks of the budget speech; requires a vote

on the budget; permits the House to sit more than 4.5 hours a day; permits the House to sit for more than 25 weeks a year; ensures that funding for social programs and other vital government operations is not interrupted.

It brings the rules more into line with those of the House of Commons. People throughout the world look to our House of Commons and the Canadian parliamentary traditions as something that are very vital to democracy, and sometimes I believe that we too often take this for granted. We should adopt the House of Commons notice of requirement for raising points of privilege; adopt the House of Commons rules on rotation of speakers, thereby allowing more MPPs to participate in debate; adopt the House of Commons time requirement for replying to petitions; adopt the House of Commons time requirement for replying to order paper questions; adopt the House of Commons limit to the number of questions a member can place on the order paper at any one time.

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The technical changes would eliminate potential disagreements over who gets the floor; clarify that motions to have the House work overtime are properly moved during the motions section of routine procedures; clarify the treatment of the points of privilege to reflect parliamentary precedent more accurately; fix the time for voting on opposition day motions and motions of non-confidence and time allocation motions to a standard time; confirm the existing practice whereby the business statement is not read if the business for the coming week has not yet been determined; confirm that a bill reported from committee may be ordered for third reading by a majority vote; fix the length of debate on concurrence in supply; reduce the size of standing and select committees; reflect the existing practice respecting the review of intended government appointments.

In addition, nothing in this motion limits debate on any bill by one moment. The proposed changes allow for more democratic debate by permitting more debate.

The public view the Legislature with disdain. Of course, this is something that is not conducive to the operation of this institution, because it engages in tomfoolery and dilatory tactics.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of order, Speaker: You would notice that there is not a quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll check and see. Would you check and see if there's a quorum in the House?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker. *The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Frontenac-Addington.

**Mr Vankoughnet:** In conclusion, I want to say that this is an attempt to allow this House to clean up its act. It's long overdue to regain some public respect. These amendments will create an essential balance in the proceedings of this Legislature which will enable the government to effectively govern and the opposition to effectively oppose.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** I'm very pleased to join this debate on the amendments that



are presently in front of us and to deal with a couple of the items the last member, my colleague and immediate neighbour to the west from Frontenac-Addington, has talked about.

Before doing so, I'm sure the average person watching this must be wondering to themselves, "What are all these quorum calls?" I think it should be clearly understood by the general public out there who may be watching that —

**The Acting Speaker:** I think you may be on thin ice. We're now discussing the amendments to the motion.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's exactly what I'm discussing too, Mr Speaker. I'm glad you're listening to me. It's greatly appreciated.

We have quorum calls, and a quorum in this House is 20 members. It's the government's business that we're dealing with, so they should have at least 20 members here, but there are only 15 here, and then of course there are five or six members from the opposition. I'm glad the Attorney General is here today, because I'm sure he can throw some light on a lot of the things that have been talked about as well.

It's kind of interesting that one of the things that each member of the government has talked about is we're now going to vote, according to these new rules, on a budget annually. Isn't that wonderful. Let me tell you that I have absolutely no objection to that.

If you want to change the rules so that there will be a budget debate for a certain period of time and a vote on that, that's great. But that's about the only thing you're adding; everything else you're taking away from the standing orders. You're limiting the existing standing orders. To continually keep harping on the fact, "We're now going to have a debate on the budget," as if this is some wonderful new thing you've come up with — I say congratulations to you. We're all in favour of that. If you want us to vote on the budget, we will do so.

The other thing they keep talking about — the last member said that actually the amount of time we have to debate particular issues is not going to be limited as a result of these rule changes. Again the general public should understand that the leadoff speaker, who currently has the opportunity to speak for 90 minutes — and that time is quite frequently shared with other members of his or her caucus — you're now going to limit that to 40 minutes. Any subsequent speaker, who can now speak for 30 minutes, you're going to limit to 20 minutes.

If you multiply all those numbers by the number of people we have in the House, you can only come to one conclusion: that ultimately you have the power and the control, as a result of these rule changes, to limit the debate or to decrease it by somewhere between 30% to 40%. So it is totally erroneous to say that these rule changes are not going to limit the amount of debate in this House. It will. The times you allow the original speaker to speak for and the other people to respond are shorter, so undoubtedly you're going to have less debate here.

Another issue, a much more important issue, in my opinion, is the meaningfulness of the debate that takes place here. The notion I've advanced on a number of different occasions, and I think I've even had concurrence about this when I raised it at the committee level a year

or so ago, is the idea that somebody could speak for 90 minutes and everybody else for 30 minutes — I know some people out in the real world must be saying to themselves, "That's an awful long period of time." It seems to me that if you want to have some real debate on any particular issue, maybe you should allow a member not to speak for any longer than a total of 30 minutes but allow that person to get up as often as he or she wants. You can then engage in some meaningful debate.

**Mr Wildman:** You can do that in the committee of the whole.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You can do that in the committee of the whole, but even that's limited in these rule changes. I don't know whether you've noticed that in these rule changes, it talks about that even in committee you can only speak for 20 minutes. I have no idea what that means. Does that mean at a committee level a person on a particular point could only speak once, and then for only 20 minutes? I'll tell you, that is going to limit the amount of discussion that's going to take place at committee level.

I agree that at committee level quite often you have the most interesting discussions, because you've got a lot of give and take and somebody says something and there's a point made and a counterpoint made. It's like a normal conversation. Why couldn't we have that here? I'm sure with modern technology there is nothing to prevent the Clerk's table from keeping track of how long everybody has spoken on a particular bill and just allowing a person to get up more than once. Rather than having them speak once for 30 minutes, have them speak for a total time of 30 minutes. If the member for Wellington has something interesting to say and somebody else wants to respond to that, you can have a meaningful debate going back and forth rather than these 30-minute dissertations and speeches.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** That's why we have responses. Why don't you read the rules, then you would know what you're talking about. We have questions and comments. You can speak as many times as you like.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Under questions and comments you can speak as often as you want, but still, Mr Attorney General, I'm sure —

**Hon Mr Harnick:** You don't know what you're talking about. Quite frankly, I don't think you've read the old rules, let alone the new.

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**Mr Gerretsen:** You do know what you're talking about. Obviously you have a great need for the rule changes, I am suggesting, or else you would have waited your 30 minutes before you started your harangue. After 30 minutes, you can get into your harangue, but you couldn't wait for the 30 minutes and you've just proven to me exactly what I'm saying, that a member should be allowed to say something —

**Hon Mr Harnick:** You want us to jump up and say, "I have something to add."

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's right. Absolutely. That's where you have a real, meaningful debate.

He's obviously quite exercised about this. He must have had a bad day at the office or something like that.



I'm sure he realizes there's an awful lot of truth in what I'm saying or else he wouldn't be reacting the way he is. We know he's just dying to get it off his chest, whatever he wants to say. Under my proposed changes to the rules, whereby we'd engage in real, meaningful debate, he actually could get up now and say something, of course with the permission of the person who has the floor. This is the way it's quite frequently done in other jurisdictions as well.

The other thing the member for Frontenac-Addington talked about was, "Let's adopt the federal House rules." It may be easy for people to say: "That sounds like a good idea. If it works over there, why wouldn't it work here?" You've got to remember that they've got 300 members there. After the next election we will have a third of those members. They also have 20 opposition days in the federal House. We don't have anything close to that; we have closer to about six opposition days for each caucus. You cannot just take the rules of one particular chamber, whether it's the federal House or not, and try to transplant them on this House.

What really should happen, and we've talked about this before, is that there should be a committee formed, with representation from all three parties in the House —

**Interjection:** Equal representation.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Equal representation — to really talk about these rules, and let's see how we can meaningfully change them. The reason why that is necessary, in my opinion, is that you have to build a consensus about the rules under which we operate in this House. That is absolutely essential. I can guarantee you that if it's the government's aim and purpose to get these rules through — and it will ultimately succeed if it persists in the way it's dealing with the situation right now — if they're only going to be adopted even by two thirds of the members of this House, they are not going to have the same kind of respect than if you had something worked out among all three parties.

If it's along the way that's being suggested, with the House leaders talking to one another and always having that smoking gun in the government House leader's hands saying, "You're either going to negotiate with me now or else I'm going to let this gun go off etc.," it's not going to work that way. The only way it's going to work is if everyone in this House buys into whatever rules this committee can come up with.

Unfortunately, that's not the way this government has decided to proceed with it. I think what we can look at is what's happened over the last two years with this government in power. We all know about Bill 26 and how it was railroaded through this House. It was only by the extraordinary action of Alvin Curling and a number of others that the government finally relented and said, "Okay, we'll have some more debate." As a result of the actions the opposition had to take, 150 different amendments were proposed.

We can also take a look at the megacity bill, for example. The government repeatedly said during its election campaign that it wanted to bring referenda back to the people of Ontario and let them have a real say in some of the changes they were going to effect in this province. We had referenda here in the six area municipalities that make up Metropolitan Toronto, that over-

whelmingly voted against the megacity, and then both the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs said, "It doesn't count in this particular case because we don't think people knew what they were voting for."

The question, you may recall, was very simple: "Do you want to live in one megacity or do you want to retain the six area municipalities?" People felt very strongly about it. They darn well knew what they were voting for and they voted diametrically against it.

That's not what it's about either. This is really about one thing and one thing only, and that is to stifle the will of the minority, to stifle the voice of the minority as represented here by the two opposition parties.

The other thing I always find very interesting about this is that even if we go back to the election that took place two years ago, this government was elected and supported by 45% of the people who voted in Ontario on June 8, 1995. Somehow they have translated that into a huge belief that they can make some radical changes to Ontario society. What they keep forgetting is that 55% of the people voted against that. It may very well be that because of our electoral system they've got 82 seats, and I'll grant them that, which is probably about 65% of the total number of seats in this House, but the fact of the matter is still that those 82 members, their party, only got 45% of the popular vote in favour of the government back in 1995. I don't think they have this overwhelming mandate to make the kinds of changes they want.

The other interesting thing, and I've heard it mentioned here a couple of times today, is that they place great emphasis on the fact that an independent member can speak now. Hopefully the independent member will get an opportunity to speak on this as well, but certainly from my speaking to him today, he doesn't like these rules either. I'm all in favour of having an independent member speak, there's no question about it, but they somehow make it sound as if, "We're now letting an independent member speak and we're allowing him to take certain courses of action in this House."

Of course an independent member should have a say as to what happens in this House, nobody has any problem with that, but they somehow want to translate that into the notion, "We're giving the independent member more powers now," and therefore he's somehow on the side of these rule changes. He can speak for himself later on, but it's my understanding he doesn't share their belief that all of a sudden, because of the new powers that are given to the independent member, all these rule changes are for the good.

The other thing that is interesting is that when we look at these amendments that were moved today by the minister of privatization, who I thought was a very appropriate minister to move these kinds of amendments, it almost seems that maybe his major task now is the privatization of this House. Then they can do away with democracy completely. We can elect the government once every four years and let them do whatever they want. Well, that's not the way it works.

I think ultimately a democracy will be judged by the way it treats its minorities, whether we're talking about minorities relating to race, creed, colour, whatever, or whether it's a parliamentary minority like this. I think



history will show that this government is not doing that in a very compassionate or a very open way, because most of the major changes it has brought in in a very radical, very fast way without any meaningful debate.

What's interesting in dealing with the amendments is that they refer to an amendment to clause 9(c). That's the one that you may recall originally said that at any time the House leader can decide whether we sit after 6 o'clock. We can be called back on a particular day and sit between 6:30 and 9:30, and the question on a motion as to whether or not we should be sitting later on "shall be put forthwith and without amendment or debate." That means he could bring it in at any time and we'd have to vote on it, without any amendment or debate.

The change that is being made to 9(c) doesn't deal with the amendment or debate portion at all. In other words, it can still not be debated as to whether or not it is appropriate for the House to sit, let's say, until 9:30 in any particular week. All the amendment to 9(c) states is that it has to be done on notice. In other words, they can't dump it on us at the last minute but they have to give us at least one sessional day's notice.

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It's an improvement, I agree it's an improvement, but it certainly still doesn't deal with the major issue, and that is that a motion like that surely ought to have some debate and ought to be able to be amended. When a government wants to sit for an extra three hours or for a series of three hours during a particular week, surely the opposition has the right to ask questions about it, surely it's a matter that should be debated, and your amendment doesn't say that. All it says is that it has to be done on notice; that's all. It could still be voted on without any debate whatsoever.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Have you got something better to do than be in here debating? Where would you rather be?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I would much rather be here debating. That's correct. But again the Attorney General shows his lack of understanding: There is nothing to debate when 9(c) is being brought forward. Even with the amendment, Mr Attorney General, it just has to be done on notice and it has to be voted on immediately without any debate or amendment.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** They like you to be here. The constituents want you.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Obviously he's had a very, very bad day at the office or else he wouldn't be so exercised about a point that is extremely, extremely reasonable.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I think you're blathering and it's pretty obvious. You're blathering along and it's just terrible. I just don't understand.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** You should be putting that energy into the family support plan.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's right, of course. We could be talking about the family support plan. If they did not try to bring in these new, draconian rules that will set democracy back even further, we could be talking about the family support plan and the 50% of the calls that you're actually responding to — when was that stated in the House? — on a daily basis. My gosh, for a government that likes to pride itself on running government in a businesslike manner, a 50% pickup on calls that are actually returned to people I would say is very, very bad.

I know that in my business, and I'm sure in the businesses of many of the people who are in private business in one way or the other, if you only returned 50% of your calls, you wouldn't be in business very long. All I can say to the Attorney General is: Why don't you try to do something positive? Why don't you try to make sure that the women and children of this province who are entitled to the support payments that are coming into your offices and are being paid for by husbands and wives etc, why don't you ensure that those support payments are properly being distributed to the people?

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. It's my duty to remind you that it's up to the person speaking to debate and for the rest of us to let him, but I would appreciate if you'd address your comments to me.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Mr Speaker, once again I totally concur with you. I always like to address my comments to you, except that we sometimes are provoked by the Attorney General when he has one of these outbursts. Sometimes we cannot control ourselves and we have to say something back, especially on behalf of those women and children who have been denied the proper kind of support that has been paid into the plan. These people depend on that kind of money on a month-to-month and a week-to-week basis.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Tell us about the rules, Gerretsen. Come on, we want to hear about the rules. You still have 10 more minutes; you must have something to say.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I've been trying to talk about the rules, but it's obvious that you haven't read them. I would say if anyone in this House has a valid excuse for not reading the rules, it's the Attorney General, I agree. He's got so many other things on his plate and so many other things that a lot of people think are being mismanaged in his particular portfolio, he really should be looking after those issues.

For example, he could be putting more money into the legal aid plan. Look at the number of women who are no longer entitled to legal aid representation and certificates in family law situations and in divorce situations, people who are in effect denied a right of representation because of the tremendous kinds of cutbacks that he has brought into the legal aid plan and why? So that he, together with the other ministries, could have enough money left to fund the tax cut.

Mr Speaker, I know you might think I'm straying off topic, but I think it's all interconnected. It's all totally interconnected. To give the people of Ontario a 30% tax cut while we're still running an annual deficit of \$6 billion to \$7 billion per year and while the public debt of this province is still going up from \$100 billion to \$120 billion in a matter of four to five years makes absolutely no sense. He would be much better taking some of that money, which of course goes to the people who make \$100,000 or more in the greatest amount, and spending some of that money to make sure that his own department ran properly and accurately so that they could at least answer more than 50% of the phone calls that are being made to the department right now.

The other thing that's kind of interesting deals with the order paper questions. These are the kinds of questions that the members of the House have the right to make to



the particular ministries. I can read you a couple of these questions. For example, "Would the Minister of Community and Social Services provide the estimated dollar value the minister has cut from Hamilton-Wentworth in the time period of June 1995 to May 1997?" What is wrong that kind of question? Absolutely nothing. I think the people in that particular part of Ontario have the right to know how much has been cut by that particular ministry as it affects the residents who live in that area. Those are the kinds of questions that, I grant you, go on page after page, but they're the kinds of issues and questions and answers that people are interested in.

There's never been a limit on this. Some members take advantage of it. I'll be quite honest with you, I have never taken advantage of that, but I want the right to ask those kinds of questions. Why should we all of a sudden limit that initially to four questions on the order paper? There are some members here who have probably 30 or 40 questions in different ministries, wanting different kinds of information. This is public information. The standing orders are quite clear. Members are entitled to know how their taxpayers' dollars are being expended.

The amendment has now come back and they've said: "Okay, maybe we were harsh with four; we'll make it 10." What they simply don't understand is that by doing that they are limiting democracy. You are limiting the right of a member, any member, government or opposition member, to know about how the public's money is being expended in a particular area.

You may recall there was a question and answer that I had with the Treasurer of Ontario — I think it was one day last week — on this very issue. He said, "You should get the right to ask 3,000 or 4,000." The point is, nobody has asked for 3,000 or 4,000 of these inquiries, but a member should not be limited by a standing order in the number of inquiries that he or she wants to find out about on behalf of his or her constituents. That is limiting that member's ability to function and operate in this House.

Many and most of the rule amendments deal with that kind of notion. They deal with the notion of taking the rights of the members and decreasing them even more. When we're in a time when it's already difficult for members, and I dare say for members not only on the opposition but also on the government side, to find out about particular programs or how money's being expended, and when there's a public cynicism out there about politicians in general, I think it behooves us all to expand the democratic rights that we enjoy here and to get involved in a more meaningful debate with members from the other side. I think that's what this is really all about.

Can this place be made better than the way it is? Can we operate it in a better, more efficient manner? Can we operate it in a manner in which there is a freer debate between members? Absolutely. But you're not going to get there by saying to the individual members: "I'm sorry. You're no longer going to have your 90-minute leadoff speech of your critic or your 30-minute speech here. We're going to limit that now to 40 minutes and 20 minutes. And if we want you to sit tomorrow night or all of next week, we can do that almost at a moment's notice. If you've got 11 questions, I'm sorry, you can

only ask 10 questions on the order paper." All of our rights are being affected by those kinds of actions and I don't think that any of us gain from that.

The other interesting point that the member for Frontenac-Addington raised was that the House can sit up to 25 weeks, according to the calendar, I guess. I've never actually figured it out, but that would be about right. There are 12 weeks in the spring and about 13 weeks in the fall and winter session. I don't know how many weeks we've been here since mid-September of last year, but it seems to me we've been here almost continually, with the exception of about seven or eight weeks. I'm sure we've been here much more than 25 weeks, and we would love to be here longer than that if it's done on a calendar motion, if it's done so that we all know what the calendar says.

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If you want to expand the calendar to allow for more debate on particular issues, that's fine, but I don't think it should be done in the way the government is suggesting, because the government is still denying the fact that in effect when it could start a new sessional day by starting after 6:30 on a particular day, it doesn't have to have that central piece of the parliamentary democratic system, and that is question period. Question period, let's face it, is the opportunity for the opposition particularly to hold the ministers of the crown accountable. I'm afraid that with that gone, many of the parliamentary democratic practices and procedures that we all value very dearly will be sorely missed, and I think we'll all be the worse off for it.

I'm almost ready to wind up because I know that I've spoken on these issues before, but the government's spin, of course, is that these amendments are a great improvement. What I've tried to indicate over the last little while is that these amendments are very minor in nature. They have taken one very offensive one out of there, which I'm glad to see. That's the one where apparently a member, under the rules as originally proposed, could be expelled up to eight sessional days by the Speaker having a vote on the matter. You can just imagine what's going to happen most of the time if it happens to be an opposition member who isn't liked or for whatever reason. By the government side it's very easy to vote for: Let's expel the individual for eight sessional days. At least they've done away with that, and I'm glad for that because that was truly very offensive.

I think the discretion ought to be with the Speaker. You are the Speaker. You're elected by the majority of the members in this House and I think all of us uphold the right of the Speaker to show his or her independence and to exercise that discretion that has been placed on the Speaker in an appropriate fashion. Certainly for the assembly here to decide on a moment's notice as to whether or not a member can be expelled from this House would be highly inappropriate because the will of the minority could be stifled even further.

**Mr Wildman:** They could at least call him to the bar.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's correct.

I think I've said just about everything I'm going to at this stage, but I would just like to remind you, in the last few seconds that I have, what Ernie Eves said, and maybe this is a good way to finish.



He said, "I think one has to understand that the only way opposition — not just opposition members but any public opposition to any proposed piece of legislation — can be effectively dealt with or talked about under our system of government, under the parliamentary system of government, is through the opposition parties' ability to debate, and yes, on occasion even to stall or slow down the progress of a particular bill, and that has worked very effectively over the years against governments of all political stripes."

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity tonight to speak to this bill. Some people have said in this House and outside this House that the Harris government doesn't understand democracy, that they don't know what they're doing here. I would say that the Harris government, in particular the Premier and the people who are running this government in his inner chambers, know perfectly well what they're doing here, and what's happening is that they are afraid of democracy.

I'll bet you anything that their own polls are showing them they've taken a bit of a beating over the last two years on the speed at which they've been moving through things. They've got a lot of other very controversial legislation coming up, and I'll bet you anything, Speaker, that they know exactly what they're doing here and they're willing to take this on and stand up and pretend that they think this is not anti-democratic, that this is fair, just trying to make the decorum of the House more acceptable, trying to make it a little more smooth for governments to operate and get things through.

But we all know what's going on here. I can tell you what's happening here. They've had a lot of controversial legislation. They're still fairly high in the polls, but I'll bet you anything that their polls are showing them that if they continue on this road, which they have every intention of doing, they're going to start going down in the polls, that the opposition has been effective, that what they call shenanigans and filibustering has actually worked, that on very controversial and devastating legislation like Bill 26, which we all know about by now, and the fact that if we hadn't stopped this government in its tracks, this province would be in complete disaster as a result of that right now — they know that.

They know they're in trouble over the family support plan and the remarks by the Ombudsman's office that they really messed that up and that thousands of women and children suffered as a result. They know that even though environmental issues are not necessarily at the top of people's agendas right now because of all of the other things that are going on, they're vulnerable in that area. They know that they are vulnerable in terms of the things they have done to seniors in this province. They know.

I see my colleague the member for Hamilton Centre is here. They know what they have done in the past to our labour legislation has gutted it in a very anti-democratic way. Given the way they attacked women and pay equity and employment equity and all of that, they know that after a while, overall, when we look at the cumulative effect of those anti-democratic and anti-community measures, people are going to start putting it all together and it's going to hurt them.

They still have a lot of controversial legislation to bring through the House and they want to get it done fast. They want the press to not be able to report on it. They want to silence the opposition and get it done and out the door as quickly as they can so there will be a minimum amount of fuss, so there won't be the John Sewells out there and the Citizens for Local Democracy and all of the workers who rallied around the labour bills and the women who are rallying around the violence-against-women issues. In all of those areas, they don't want those people to know what is happening.

They want to get it through as quickly as possible in this House so there won't be time for people to understand what's happening. Hopefully they think if they just speed it all up and get it through the House as quickly as possible, they can take a rest. They can just shut down the place and go out there and give good-news announcements and hopefully at least their own supporters, their little universe whom they need to re-elect them, won't be too mad, won't be too touched themselves by all of this stuff, and they can win the next election. There's a strategy here by the boys in the back room, and that's what it is.

When people say words like "dictatorship," in my view it's not used lightly. There are other words that are bandied about that I don't use because I think we have to be very careful in this country, in this democracy in which we've lived for a long time. But I would use the word "dictatorship," because from what I've seen from day one when this government took over, we've been moving more and more in that direction.

When the government talks, repeatedly there are two incidents it likes to bring up as examples of why we need to just fix the system here a little bit. They refer to the Alvin Curling affair, and I notice many of the members referring to that. I want to remind the members of the government that it wasn't the Alvin Curling affair; it was a strategy worked out by both of the opposition parties, yes, together. Because at that time we were very aware, when these huge stacks of bills were dumped on our desks when most of our caucus members were in a lockup — nobody had even seen this stuff; the ministers didn't even know what was in it — that we had a big problem. The more we analysed and looked at the implications, the massive implications in that bill, the more we realized that the province was going to be in big trouble if it went through.

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But the government wouldn't listen. They still don't like to listen. Heads are shaking. They wouldn't listen and we forced them by that sit-in because we had no other choice. We tried everything we could to say to the government: "This isn't just about the opposition opposing. We have found some real problems with this bill and your own ministers don't know what's in it."

We started to point out, and communities across the province within their own areas started to look at, the implications of this bill — the mistakes, let alone the policy issues that many of us disagreed with — and started to point out hundreds of them. The government remained steadfast and said, "No, we're going to forge ahead." We tried everything within the rules and the government said, "No, we're not going to listen."



We did not take it lightly as opposition; I know our party didn't. We debated at length about how we were going to deal with this, but we knew we had to do something. I'm sure the Liberal Party went through the same process because, as with everybody I've heard speak to this bill in the House, all of us prefer to work within the parliamentary rules. I know that I do and I try to. But there are times when a government is so arrogant and so sure of itself, is so willing to move forward without even knowing itself what's in its own bills, that it is very dangerous, and it is our job as the opposition to make sure that comprehensive, all-consuming bills like that do not go through without public scrutiny.

So yes, we forced the government to hold hearings, and at the end of the day it actually worked in the government's favour because they were able to find hundreds of mistakes. They didn't change much of their policy, although a little bit, but they fixed up a lot of really terrible mistakes which would have caused problems down the road for a long, long time; or they would have had to keep coming back to fix the bill up.

We helped the process. I know the members of the government don't want to see it that way, but that is the reality. We helped that process.

**Interjection:** The public helped.

**Ms Churley:** The public helped that process by getting involved, by analysing the bill carefully within their own sectors. All of those sectors have experts and they were able to come back and say: "Look, even if we don't agree on the policy here, you've made numerous mistakes. This won't work." Because of the public involvement, the different stakeholders' involvement and the opposition involvement, many, many important changes were made.

Then we had the megacity fiasco where I think it was 74% overall, with a high turnout for a municipal election, particularly a referendum, voted against the megacity. The government said, "No, we don't care what you have to say." This was after we had a government member, the member for Brampton South, stand up and say: "We believe in referenda. We want the support of the opposition. We think the people should have a say in these matters." Then when the time came for a very vital local issue to be resolved, what did the government say? They said: "That's too complicated for the people to figure out. We can't ask them that. They wouldn't know how to deal with it. We're talking about other kinds of issues," although that wasn't defined.

The government decided not to listen. Once again, the opposition was placed in a position where, to do our job, we were forced to look at ways outside — actually, we worked within the rules, and that's what the government is now trying to plug, to find all the little areas there might be where the opposition can be effective and make a point and actually change something for the better, to make the public more aware.

It's not going to work, as many members in the House have already said. I don't think there is any problem with a committee of the Legislature to sit down with our very able and experienced clerks — Speaker, you and I work with these clerks on a regular basis — who have been here for a very long time and who I am sure have some very good ideas about changes to this place. I don't think

I would necessarily agree with them all — we've had some discussions — but I am very interested in their views on where they see the most reasonable changes that should be made to improve decorum, make the process go more smoothly. I think that's a good idea.

But no, that's not what the government did. The government cherry-picked. They looked at what happens in the House of Commons and across Canada, perhaps other jurisdictions, and they said, "We've taken the best from all of those." But what they've done, as has been pointed out by my able House leader, the member for Algoma, and others, is to cherry-pick from all over the place without putting in the balancing corresponding rules. You end up having a decreased question period. You end up having far less accountability.

At the end of the day, this is going to hurt the democratic process in Ontario. I think they know that and, as I said at the beginning, I think that it has been done for a purpose, that it's quite deliberately shutting down democracy because democracy is getting in the way of the Harris government agenda.

One of the issues in this bill that concerns me — and yes, there was an amendment made today. I listened with great interest to the amendments as presented this afternoon. It surprised me that those amendments were presented at such a time. I know that my House leader, the member for Algoma, wanted to go to Larry Grossman's funeral today. Many of the members here did go to that funeral. I know Mr Wildman and Mr Bradley had to stay because they didn't know what the order of the day was, and then when those amendments were put forward, as the House leaders they needed to be here to deal with that.

I think that was despicable. I really do. There was no need for it. All of the parties agreed today to move up question period so that anybody, particularly the ministers of the Conservative Party, could go to that funeral. Everybody agreed, yes, that's fair and that we would make an exception for today. Then what does this government do? After we had made that agreement, it deprived our caucuses from knowing what was going to be called today until the last minute, so the member for Algoma and the member for St Catharines, as House leaders, couldn't go and then they were forced to stay to deal with the rule changes. I would like to believe, as others have said, that the majority in that party, most people in that caucus, had they known the implications of this, would not have supported that decision.

In hindsight, if you think about what happened today — and I know how busy caucus members get, not just cabinet ministers. We've all been there in this caucus. Cabinet ministers are busy, but so are the parliamentary assistants and the backbenchers; they have a lot of their own things to do. Sometimes you don't pay enough attention to what's going on. You're just told, "This is what's happening today," and nobody explains to you the implications and the optics and the cruelty of what happened today. I really think that most of the members, had they been aware of the type of agreement that was made, would not have approved of this kind of despicable, unkind behaviour today.

One of the rules, even with the amendment, that concerns me as a Metro member — and this is not for a



moment to imply to my out-of-town colleagues that they don't work hard in the evenings, because I know they do —

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Where are you going?

**Ms Churley:** I just said I'm not accusing anybody of anything. I know members from my caucus, for instance, during the megacity debate and the weekly meetings all over the place every night, all were out at those meetings. They're involved —

**Mr Bisson:** Including the out-of-town members.

**Ms Churley:** That's what I just said — including the out-of-town members. Seriously, I know that most members of the House are busy often in the evenings as well, no matter where they're from. But I've got to tell you that as a Metro member whose riding luckily is very close to here — in my car 15 minutes, on my bike 25 — I have a constituency meeting practically every night of the week. Some of those meetings I call myself, well in advance; some are community meetings. Sometimes it's a local community centre, a local school graduation or an environmental meeting; you name it. It's a big riding, and it's going to get bigger with a huge chunk of East York being part of that.

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This government, I can assure you, presents us with many issues, so there are many more meetings than ever before. I'm expected to be at those meetings. I want to be at those meetings. I want to play the role I have played as a local politician in that area since 1988. That is the role of facilitator to the voice of my community. I believe that's what politicians are all about. We are there to help facilitate, to be the voice of the people in our ridings. Certainly in my riding that is what's expected. That's a huge part of why people vote for the politicians they do, because they're very active in the local community. So I make commitments well ahead of time. I call meetings, I send out notices, I respond and agree to be the guest speaker or just to show up at a meeting as the local member to hear the concerns, the issues.

With this rule and the amendment today which says the government will now give notice before they announce a night sitting — it doesn't say how much notice. Is it going to be the day before? Is it going to be the Thursday before the Monday? Is it going to be a week? Is it going to be two days? What? How am I going to with any confidence — this infringes on my privilege as a member and I resent it very much. It is going to make me not nearly as effective a community-based member as I have been for eight or nine years now, and that's important to me. It's why I ran in the first place and it's what I like to do. I love this place; I like to be here and engage in debate. I think it's very important that we have that structure and the ability to participate in the debate.

I also think it is more important in some ways to get the message out there to the community. There has to be a balance here, and what the government is doing as they giggle away over there at all this — because as usual, the member for Scarborough-Ellesmere and the member for Durham East are taking my comments on this with some

measure of amusement. I say to the members, I would hope when they were elected there was some expectation — because particularly the member for Scarborough-Ellesmere is also in the Metro area.

We are now in the position where at the drop of a hat we're going to be told we're going to have to sit tomorrow night, or three nights from now, and I'm going to be put in the position where I may have to cancel a meeting that I have called myself. If it's an issue that's within my critic area, I'm going to have to be here. We may have problems with enough members, because we've got out-of-town members and in-town members. There are times when I'm not going to be able to be in my community when the expectation is that I will be there. I also think that is despicable behaviour, and it does infringe on my rights. It infringes on my ability to be the best possible member for my constituents.

I sincerely hope, even though the amendments were put forward today, that is thought through again. The rationale for it is very clear. The government says today that with the amendments, including the new evening, they won't be able to get a bill through in three days. What they will be able to do is get two bills through in six days. It still all comes out in the wash at the end of the day. I think it's totally unnecessary and should be rethought.

When the Ombudsman came out with her latest report, she said some pretty devastating things about the Attorney General's role and this government's role in the so-called restructuring of the family support plan. To all the people out there who may be paying attention to this debate and trying to figure out what it means to them, I think we all agree that the rules of the House — let's think about it: first reading, second reading, third reading, royal assent. Let's face it. Most people, for good reason, don't understand or don't pay all that much attention to the meaning of those words, the implications of that.

It can be difficult to get the word out that these rule changes are going to have a huge impact on how quickly legislation is passed through this House, the lack of the role of the media in getting the word out and the role of all the opposition, and perhaps some disgruntled members in the government. I see the member for Grey-Owen Sound is here tonight, and dare I mention the member for Wentworth North — the unofficial opposition, I should say.

It gives people the opportunity to get the message out to their communities and it gives people an opportunity to organize and to oppose and to protest and to also give the government alternatives, to also give the government the ability to understand some of the implications of the changes they're making.

All of us who have been in government know that any new bill or law, either through the courts or through the Legislature, sometimes, in fact probably always, has implications and ramifications that aren't even thought of. I would submit that the less time that's given by the government to scrutinize a bill and the less time the opposition and in particular the public, who will be most affected, have time to scrutinize and yes, criticize and suggest, the more problems will evolve from that new piece of legislation.

Even with a long consultation period, there are usually implications that have not been thought of, and then the lawmakers with the affected communities have to start dealing with those problems. But it makes sense and it is a responsible act of those who are entrusted with making those laws that benefit or hurt our communities. It is to their advantage and it is their responsibility to talk to the people who are going to be affected and to make the necessary changes.

It is true that there will be policy differences between any government and the stakeholder groups and the communities at large which can or will be affected, either negatively or positively, but the government has a responsibility to listen. As other members in this House have said, this is not a business we're running here. This is supposed to be a democracy. Democracy can be messy and sometimes time-consuming, but it is necessary that people have their say. I would like to think that the members who are sitting here tonight — I know one or two of them agree with me, because we have discussed these matters.

This is important. If we go ahead and change these rules because the members over there haven't really read them, haven't really paid attention — because I believe, member for Durham East, that if you read those rules and understood the implications of those rules, you wouldn't support them, because some day you may be over here. I would like to think that if they paid attention, as the member for Grey-Owen Sound did, who has been over here in opposition and is probably worse off over there now in government — at least over here he could stand up and just rage against the government. His opportunities to do that are limited now, although we're pleased to see him do it from time to time.

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I think it is a break of the public trust to do what this government is doing. I challenge all the members to take a look at the rule changes and talk to some people in your caucus whom you may know recognize there is a problem with these rule changes and that they in fact are totally unnecessary. Because, as has been pointed out by others in this Legislature on all sides of the House, some of whom have been here a lot longer than I, through experience, the irony is it isn't going to work.

In a way, Speaker, it's going to affect the decorum in this place, which is something that you and I, as deputy Speakers, have to worry about, and anybody else who sits in that chair. When we sit in that chair, we try to keep the rules, because that's our role. I know when I sit in that chair, as do you, Speaker, you become neutral and it is your job to be fair to everybody and it is your job to try to keep decorum in this House. What's going to happen now, with opportunities within the legislative rules being shut down, of course, is that the opposition will find every opportunity it can, if necessary outside the rules. If the government won't slow down controversial legislation, the opposition will find a way. I find that extremely unfortunate in this place where people stand up and some of them are making excuses, saying they hear from the public that the decorum in this place is awful and it's time to change it. It isn't going to work.

I want to just make clear to some members who may have misunderstood what I said earlier about certain members like the member for Grey-Owen Sound that I wasn't suggesting for a moment that I expected anybody to cross the floor; in fact, I think we would have perhaps great trepidation in accepting the member for Grey-Owen Sound in our caucus.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I've got nowhere to go now; I have no home now at all.

**Ms Churley:** I didn't mean to hurt his feelings, but I'm sure he understands.

I would say seriously to the members that what I was saying is that to the members of the opposition this is bad news. These rule changes aren't going to work. It may make you feel better for a while: "We're putting the boots to the opposition. How dare they try to slow us down? We're the government. We're going to get this through and we have every right to. How dare they slow us down?"

I understand that attitude. It can be frustrating, but I can assure you that (a) it isn't going to work, and (b) it's going to come back to haunt you. I would advise all of you to take a better look at the rules and go to your House leader and talk to some of the members, like the members for Parry Sound and Carleton and others who have been mentioned, who understand there are some problems with these rules, and see if you can come forward with some amendments. Let's talk about having some kind of all-party committee working with the table officers to come up with sensible rules that would really make a difference to this place. I'm absolutely appalled at what's happening here, and I strongly object.

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** I'm pleased to rise today to join in the debate on the motion to amend the standing orders of this House. I have read the motion. I have read the amendments that are being proposed.

**Ms Churley:** So you're not going to read your speech.

**Mrs Ross:** I'm not reading my speech. But having read the amendments, I still do not profess to be an expert. To be quite frank, I find the standing orders to be a little complicated, and I think that the member for Nepean deserves a lot of credit for undertaking a mission such as this. We in our caucus have discussed standing order amendments for some time. I don't know what prompted the member for Nepean to press onward and come forward. Perhaps it was what has been referred to as the Alvin Curling affair. Perhaps it was the filibuster. I'm sure they contributed to his wish to go forward and bring these amendments to fruition.

Our House leader made a statement in the House where he said that he felt the standing orders struck a good balance between the rights of members to participate in a free, open and thorough debate on issues and legislation and the right of the House to make decisions in a timely manner.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You don't believe that, do you?

**Mrs Ross:** Yes, I do believe that. I think that what the amendments do is facilitate further debate in the House. They allow backbenchers more opportunity and more participation in legislation. I think they give us much more opportunity to speak and bring forward issues as we hear them.



I have never been able to understand how a member, especially of the opposition, can get up and talk for 90 minutes. When I look through Hansard and I review comments that members have made over a 90-minute time frame —

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** And say nothing.

**Mrs Ross:** They sometimes say nothing, but sometimes they say the same thing several times, over and over again, because you tend to run out of things to say after some time.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Oh, come on. We never said that about the target.

**Mrs Ross:** No, you didn't say that.

I want to refer to some other comments that were made by the finance minister when he stated that the Prime Minister of Great Britain allows 20 minutes twice a week to answer questions. British Columbia has a 15-minute question period and Saskatchewan has a 20-minute question period. We have done nothing to change the hour of question period, so I think that's important to note.

The other thing to note is that one of the things the Liberal Party did, if members will remember, is that last week when the leader of the official opposition decided that he didn't want to participate in standing order changes, he up and walked out and left his standing orders with the Premier, and I think many of us will recall the opposition party walking out. I just want to read you a couple of quotes from an Ottawa Citizen editorial of today. It states, "It was a tantrum worthy of preschoolers in need of a nap and it demeaned the House." This article states that the proposed changes are in fact sensible and modest, and I agree with that. They are very sensible.

Some of the amendments — the one to debate and vote on the budget I think is a very important one.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Oh, that's a good one. We all agree on that.

**Mrs Ross:** We all agree on that. That's amazing. I hadn't heard that yet. I am pleased to hear that all the members agree.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order.

**Mrs Ross:** That is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that governments bring forward in this House, so I think it's important that we bring it forward and actually state that we will vote on the budget.

One of the other changes or amendments is to have private members' bills voted on. Currently 12 members in this House can vote down a private member's bill before it even gets printed, and I think that's pretty undemocratic. It's pretty silly and it doesn't allow a member to bring forward what he wants to bring forward on behalf of his constituents, so I think that's an important amendment to bring forward.

Having just taken part in a private member's bill on June 5, many of you will remember the Tartan Act, which was unanimously agreed on. I'm pretty proud of that piece of legislation. I'm looking forward to it coming forward. But again, we, even as government back-

benchers, have to compete with government orders and opposition motions and that sort of thing, so a bill that was unanimously agreed to here on June 5 won't even be brought to the committee until late August. That's kind of a disappointment that it takes that long for a unanimously agreed-to bill to go through. I'm pleased to see that change is coming.

With respect to allowing more time in the House, I don't know how anybody could disagree with that. The amendments are stating that we would allow more than four and a half hours a day for us to sit in this House, so I don't see that that would be a problem. I certainly would have no problem with that, and I know none of the members in the government would have a problem with that.

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Also, working for more than 25 weeks a year: I am taking two weeks off this year; I didn't take any last year. We all work throughout the year, but the amendments will allow us to bring forward more debate and allow the public out there to understand what's happening in the Legislature on a more frequent basis. I'm pleased to see that brought forward.

It's interesting when you hear the opposition rant and rave about the changes and how they dislike the changes and don't want to see them brought forward and there's no need for it, yet every government brings forward changes.

I just want to read some quotes. We've heard the opposition comment on the Premier and some of his comments, but in 1989 the Premier stated, "This Legislature has lagged behind, as we have in a number of other areas, and I hold this government accountable for not moving us ahead in a more timely fashion on these rule changes." That was when the Liberal government was in power.

Also, during that same time, David Cooke, the government House leader at the time, stated that they were proceeding with changes to standing orders because "They'll finally bring the Ontario Legislature in line with the other legislatures in Canada and the House of Commons." So here we are, trying to do much of what they professed to do.

In 1992 the NDP were in power and they brought some rule changes forward as well. I know the member for Cochrane South will remember when he said the changes would totally change the strategy of the opposition. The member for Riverdale even commented that the Alvin Curling affair was a strategy that the two opposition parties had worked out. Perhaps with amendments to the standing orders, they'll have to look at their strategy a little differently.

The member for Cochrane South might remember saying, "If you can't come to your point in 20 minutes, you have a real problem." I agree with that as well, because after 20 minutes you tend to ramble on and aren't quite sure what you're saying. The member for Cochrane South had a lot to say, believe me, when it came to rule changes, and he still does. He said, "The opposition parties are upset because they know that with the rule changes they are not going to be able to keep up with playing their games." The same holds true today.

That was 1992. Nothing changes. The opposition still will have trouble playing their games.

One of the best quotes I've read throughout all this was the quote from the member for Renfrew North. I hold him in such high esteem. He's such a distinguished member; he speaks so eloquently and has so much knowledge that I always listen to what he has to say. What he had to say on July 25, 1989, was: "Government members always think the opposition is being really rude and obnoxious and not doing what an upright citizen should do. Opposition members think the government is really being pigheaded about all this and ramrodding something down the throats of everybody else." Again, nothing changes. Much is the same today as it was in 1989.

The member for Nepean, as I stated, has brought forward some amendments that will provide an opportunity for much more debate, much more democracy and an opportunity for backbenchers to bring forward their issues and their concerns. I also think some of the amendments the member — I forget what riding he's from — brought forward today, especially the one where — in the first amendments brought forward, there was the time frame for debate, and when it went to the 10-minute time slots there were no what we call two-minute hits afterwards. The amendments today reinstated that two minutes to allow even more debate, even more democracy, even more opportunity for members to get involved in debate.

The member for Nepean deserves a lot of credit for working so hard to bring forward what I think are very fair changes to the rules of this House, and I very much support them.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Further debate? Mr Sampson has moved amendments to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We have a request for a deferred division: "Pursuant to standing order 28(g), I request that the vote on Mr Sampson's amendments to government notice of motion number 43 be deferred until June 24, 1997, at 5:55 pm." The vote is accordingly deferred.

Orders of the day.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I move that we adjourn.

**The Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I need orders of the day, then.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** No, the motion doesn't carry. Orders of the day.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** I have no point of order. I need orders of the day.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** The 28th order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** There is no 28th order. Orders of the day.

**Hon Mr Jackson:** Mr Speaker, I call the 10th order.

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## DEVELOPMENT CHARGES ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LES REDEVANCES D'AMÉNAGEMENT

Mr Gilchrist, on behalf of Mr Leach, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to promote job creation and increased municipal accountability while providing for the recovery of development costs related to new growth / *Projet de loi 98, Loi visant à promouvoir la création d'emplois et à accroître la responsabilité des municipalités tout en prévoyant le recouvrement des coûts d'aménagement liés à la croissance.*

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** Unaccustomed as I am to these last-minute eventualities, I indeed appreciate the opportunity to speak to this important bill to remind the people across this province that one of our goals in terms of rebuilding the investment climate and the economy in the province was restoring some common sense to the taxation at all levels under our control — and not just the income tax: I would remind people that we have cut taxes a total of 33 times since we were elected.

But we have also set upon the task of making sure our associates in governing this province, the municipalities, are equipped with the tools to make sure they do not restrain or restrict much-needed development and that they don't inappropriately use tools such as development charges as a means to offset their normal responsibilities of balancing the taxation load across all classes of taxpayers in the province and within individual municipalities.

You'll be familiar that surveys done at the time of our election showed that across the province, particularly down here in the GTA, there were communities where built into the cost of a single-family home were over \$20,000 worth of taxes, fees and levies from the local municipalities. There's no doubt, when you look at starter prices in some of the parts of the GTA of only \$120,000 to \$140,000 for a new home, we're talking one sixth to one seventh of the value of a house going to —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I understand there's some interest in discussing some of the issues revolving around this place, I say to all members, but it's very important that we hear the member for Scarborough East. I would ask all members to take those discussions outside into the lobbies.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, because this is a very important bill and I appreciate your assistance in making sure all the members have an opportunity to be involved and to hear the presentations on third reading, the discussions we're going to have here.

As I was saying when you called the other members to order, one sixth to one seventh of the cost of some new homes in the GTA are the fees, the levies and the taxes they're assessed by municipalities. No one can suggest that is not a barrier to encouraging even more people to have the pride of owning a home, to encouraging even more people to leave the rental market, a market which



in Toronto had seen vacancy rates drop as low as 0.8%. I am pleased to report that as a result of the dramatic increase in new home sales in Ontario, the dramatic increase in affordability of homes, the rate has now doubled in Toronto to 1.8%, and in some communities across southern Ontario the vacancy rate now exceeds 6%, in some cases even 8%.

We're now reaching the stage where there is a far more appropriate balance and it has become in many respects a renter's market. Their ability to ensure that the free market guarantees there are affordable apartments and, at the other end of the spectrum, the lower interest rates we're all paying as a result of the improvements to Canada's economy, in large measure due to the performance of the province of Ontario, and both due to the lower interest rates, lower development charges, lowered fees and levies from the provincial level — all those things combined have resulted in an economic boom of which we have not seen the likes, certainly since 1985 in this province.

This bill is an important bill, but it is just a small part of our goal to rebuild the economy of this province. There is no doubt that within this, there were special provisions for small industrial expansions. You'll recall that in the past there was an incredible barrier. If someone wanted to bring more jobs and more investment to Ontario, particularly to the GTA communities, there was an extraordinary new charge, an extraordinary new levy in many of those communities if someone were to expand their business, even 10%, 15% or 20%.

But we've clarified those rules now and only a major expansion can prompt the community even to go back and reappraise whether there is a new impact on the services such as sewers and roads in a community. We've got to remind people that that's the underpinning of what development charges were proposed to be in the first place. They were a means of addressing the direct impact on hard costs within a community resulting from the building of a new home, a new factory, a new office building or what have you.

Surely it was never the goal of the original framers of the entire concept of development charges that if a factory expanded by only 10% or 20% as a means to incorporate new equipment or add a new facility or a new service to an existing business, that would be seen as a reason to go back and force that company to, in large measure, pay for an entire new road or build a new library or build a new city hall.

But unfortunately, under the framework of the existing law, many communities had that opportunity, and they took it. It is no small wonder that across southern Ontario we saw many industries respond to that economic pressure, that unfair taxation, by simply not expanding, by pulling back, by participating in a climate of pessimism which unfortunately beset this province certainly between the years 1990 and 1995.

But this bill helps remedy that. This bill is part of our goal of bringing back a spirit of optimism, enthusiasm and excitement to this province. This single bill will not accomplish those goals, but it is an important part of our rebuilding of the economic sector here in the province.

Part III of the bill deals with front-ending of agreements. Municipalities and other parties to the agreement

provide for work to be done that relates to the provision of services. It can provide for some costs of development to be borne by persons who develop land in the future. But that's a very important difference from the existing statute, which quite frankly allows a municipality to assess a fee based upon a very speculative interpretation of what that land might be worth at some time in the future.

The goal in this bill was to clarify the relationship between municipalities and developers, and I believe this bill has accomplished that goal. In fact, what is most notable is that between now and the time the bill was introduced for first reading, a committee of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario met with the Urban Development Institute, representing the development side of our economy. At the start of their negotiations, as a result of their original appraisal of this bill, between the two sides they had a total of 23 concerns.

I think it is a remarkable accomplishment, and I express my gratitude on behalf of my colleagues, to AMO and to UDI for their good work, that with very little acrimony and with great alacrity, they resolved 20 of those 23 issues, and with the direct involvement of the minister latterly, those last three issues were resolved. I am very pleased to say that, if anything, the balance was tipped in favour of the municipalities, which have said to us that there are many other changes being proposed in the relationship between the province and the municipalities, and they were concerned about the total scope of those changes.

We have in large measure, I think, in their eyes, proven to them that we are very sensitive to their concerns, that we are responsive to their concerns and that where needs be, we will make sure the tools remain at their disposal to guarantee that absolutely all services that are necessary in a community will have the funding necessary.

We have a number of other sections in this bill. I would remind everyone that as with any fee any community could ever assess or propose to assess, we still provide for an opportunity for affected individuals to appeal those charges to the Ontario Municipal Board. We have guaranteed that that ability to have a complete hearing of all the issues goes beyond just your day at city hall in dealing with those worthy civil servants and politicians but extends to the Ontario Municipal Board if either side believes that a fair balance still has not been struck in whatever is originally proposed in the development charge fee schedule set out by any community.

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I think it's very relevant to bring back to you some observations. I have been privileged these last few months to serve as the province's representative when the GTA mayors and chairs meet on a monthly basis, and I can tell you that my very first meeting with them occurred just prior to second reading of Bill 98, the Development Charges Act, and there was no doubt that as a group the mayors were filled with great scepticism that this bill would be resolved in a timely fashion and in a way that they would find favourable.

Just this past Friday was the most recent meeting of mayors and chairs. They had a final report from their two



subcommittee members, and I would like to pay particular attention to and express my thanks to the work done by Mayor Ann Mulvale in Oakville and by Mayor Don Cousens, a former member of this Legislature who now serves as the mayor of Markham. They served as the subcommittee of the GTA mayors and chairs, and in their report on Friday, they were quite fulsome in their praise of the process. They expressed considerable appreciation and gratitude to Minister Leach for his personal involvement and, contrary to some of what you may hear in this chamber and outside this room from some of our critics, I think they genuinely appreciated that the process worked.

They genuinely appreciated that this government took the time to meet with them, with both sides, both the developers and the municipalities, and as a result of those meetings, as a result of the personal intervention of the minister and key staff members, we were able to cobble together a final draft of this bill which genuinely meets with the favour of all the GTA communities. At least if there were any with any lingering concerns, they did not express that at the mayors and chairs meeting, and I believe every one of the mayors was in attendance or had a representative from the community in their stead.

I think that really does go to show that the substance behind what our government is doing in terms of our efforts at economic renewal is very different from some of the rhetoric you hear. The bottom line is that we are very committed to working with our partners, in this case the municipalities and the developers, in making sure that no stone is left unturned as we move forward in our efforts to make sure that Ontario once again is the engine that pulls Confederation and that once again Ontario is the source of the economic growth and development on which the rest of this country has always traditionally relied. In that regard, I am sure that some of the enthusiasm is around Bill 98's adoption and the other pieces of legislation we brought in, such as the fair taxation reforms, which will for the first time in 50 years see a balance, a fairness brought back to property taxes across all of Ontario.

At the same time, we have brought in the 33 tax reductions. At the same time, we have eliminated over 1,500 regulations and fees, the red tape that was burdening all businesses and individuals in this province. At the same time, we are streamlining how our government does business and giving the tools to municipalities to streamline their operations. At the same time, we conducted the Who Does What initiative. Those discussions are still ongoing, but as you're well aware — it's tied intimately to Bill 98 — the issue of which level of government is best suited to both deliver a service and fund that service is rapidly reaching a conclusion.

We have responded favourably to a counterproposal that was delivered to us some months ago by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. With very minor exceptions, we accepted their proposal almost in total, and it is again an extraordinary illustration that when people are prepared to engage us in honest, honourable, productive and creative bargaining, between us we can reach resolutions that go far beyond the rhetoric, far beyond the doom-and-gloom sentiments, and actually

deliver a quality legislative product that will guarantee that this province is once again the place to invest, the place to live, the place to raise a family, the place to stake one's future.

Directly or indirectly, again from Bill 98 and these other initiatives I've mentioned, we've seen the start of that significant reinvestment by businesses and by individuals. We have seen consumer spending increase. We have seen retail spending in particular at its highest level in seven years. We have seen housing starts increase in the GTA and many other communities across Ontario by over 50%. We have seen the creation of new full-time jobs reach astronomic levels — in the last three months alone, 101,000 new full-time jobs — and just two Fridays ago you'll recall that Nortel, down in Ottawa, the former Northern Telecom, announced the almost immediate creation of 5,000 more jobs — quality jobs, high-tech jobs. We had to go back to the early 1960s to find the last time in Ontario that anyone had announced 5,000 jobs in one day, and nothing since the auto pact — which quite frankly has led to the growth in our automotive sector that is clearly the underpinning of Ontario's economy today — nothing that significant in the last 37 years has created that kind of development.

Bill 98 was an integral part of that decision, as every one of these businesses across Ontario, recognizing both the bill and its context within the Ontario budget — you'll know that for the second year in a row we've brought in budgets and been able to report that as a result of the enthusiasm created by these other initiatives that are stimulating new economic growth in this province, we are ahead of our goals. We are \$1.2 billion ahead of our own very, very aggressive proposals. That's due in no small measure to the fact that across Ontario, businesses recognize the Development Charges Act and similar pieces of legislation that affect municipalities have genuinely set this province on a very different course.

We could go through this clause by clause, and I know that many people who are watching here tonight would have an interest in our debating that sort of thing —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It appears that the member has a pager on his belt, and I understand that's against the rules.

**The Speaker:** I think we had this discussion surrounding computers and pagers and so on. It is out of order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I guess it's not my job to find out if all pagers are turned on or off. I don't really want that job. The member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I thank you, Mr Speaker. I would certainly never presume to transgress on that or any other standing order in this House, particularly those that are about to be changed and approved.

The reality though is it isn't nearly as critical for us in this House and on television here to go through the clauses in detail, because one of the significant steps forward that our government has taken in terms of improving public access to the legislative process is that you'll find almost every bill that our government has promulgated in the last two years has been loaded on the Internet. Over and above your ability to get copies from the government bookstore or from members' offices — I'm sure members of the opposition would be similarly



willing to order copies of bills for their constituents — we thought it was environmentally sensitive to cut the amount of paper we waste in printing bills that may or may not ever be ordered, and in fact it guaranteed far wider distribution of the information.

Surely with Bill 98 and all legislative initiatives such as this, nothing could be more important than to ensure that the people of this province know in detail the specifics of the legislation that our government is bringing forward. What we don't want is for people to have to make their decisions based on 20-second sound bites. What they shouldn't be making their decision on is the doom and gloom that comes from the members opposite, who have spent the last two years, with the exception of very minor technical and housekeeping bills that have come forward here, Bill 98 and others, they have spent 100% of their time suggesting that every single clause of every single bill was inappropriate, was ill considered, did not help us forward, did not improve on the status quo we inherited, did not serve the needs of the people of Ontario who on June 8, 1995, repudiated that status quo and said they wanted to set a new course, a course back to prosperity, a course back to a future for their children very different than the one they saw facing them, facing into the jaws of death between 1990 and 1995.

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We've pulled back from the brink, and we are making sure that the people of this province have the opportunity, in an unvarnished, unfettered, uncensored, honest, open and fair method, to see what's actually in the legislation. They don't need union leaders telling them what it says. They don't even need us telling them what it says, because we might — of course, I would not hold any truck or trade with that suggestion —

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum?

**The Speaker:** A quorum check, please.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I agree with the member opposite about the trials and travails of midnight sittings. I notice there are only five members in the opposition. One must assume that the other 40 members are doing good works and may be out having a dinner break. Heaven knows that a sessional day that starts at 1:30 and goes till midnight — I certainly hope their suggestion is that it is inappropriate for members to get an occasional few minutes out of this room.

But back to the bill at hand, Mr Speaker, and I'm sure you're looking forward to hearing even more about Bill 98 because it is an important bill that will have a very direct impact in your home community of Etobicoke, soon to be known as the city of Toronto.

Mr Speaker, I would remind you that in the course of the discussions, even at the very latter stages of the debate between the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Urban Development Institute and the government, there were a number of provisions in the original bill that provided for a 10% contribution from municipal-

ities for hard services and 30% towards the provision of soft services.

I think at the outset there was a very well reasoned case made that even if a new neighbourhood that is developed on the outskirts of an existing city causes the creation of new roads, and certainly the installation of new sewers and street lights, there are certain very specific hard services that go in there. It's more difficult to make a case that you need a new city hall, and it's more difficult to make a case that necessarily you need a brand-new library simply as a result of a development that goes on the edge of that existing city. Of course, if the development is large enough to justify a library on its own, that's a very different issue.

One of the concerns that developers had was that the municipalities so far have used development charges to fund in some cases quite luxurious city hall buildings, have used them to create new soft services, and quite frankly the location of some of those buildings has not been within the new developments from whence the development charges were derived but in fact were more centrally related.

Clearly, any reasonable person would understand that all the citizens of a city will wind up using that city hall, that all the citizens would have access to the library or to the new firehall, for example, or new police station. There's no doubt that it's far more difficult to make a correlation between a couple of new streets on the edge of an existing city and the need for any of those significant new soft services or in some cases even hard services.

Having said all of that, the municipalities had indicated they believed that it was very hard for them to quantify exactly what that tradeoff was; that it was very difficult for them to arrive at a formula they thought could be applied in a broad-brush method to ensure that the size of the development did not become something that involved a very complex formula or set of formulae; and that in fact it was very difficult to develop any kind of specific relationship.

I'm proud to say that, at the request of municipalities, every one of them, we have withdrawn both of those provisions from the bill. In fact, that was probably the — not probably, it was very much the principal concern of the municipalities across Ontario, particularly here in the GTA. Taking those out allowed them to embrace the bill as fully as they have.

Over the next few years, there will no doubt be a need to continue to monitor this tax. All taxes are derived from the same taxpayer's pocket. For too many years all of us in politics have kidded ourselves that somehow if one level of government was to give a tax break, in this case, a reduction in development charges, it was appropriate for other levels, particularly the federal government, to increase their income tax or other fees and levies. We are very much committed that the reduction of development charges is not something that is just offset by other taxes. It will not be offset by other user fees. It will in fact be part of a new discipline, part of a new approach to dealing with the methodology and the financing of municipal services.

Many members in this House — I know the member for Markham and my colleague from Oxford — had very



lengthy careers in the municipal sector. Their counsel and their guidance throughout this bill, as with all of the bills that come through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, has been invaluable, and I wish to thank them, in particular Mr Hardeman, the member for Oxford, and my colleague who is also a parliamentary assistant at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, for their very deep insights into the relationship that our province has historically had with municipalities and how they saw our being able to improve that relationship with this bill and with its companion pieces of legislation.

There are any number of other issues, but in terms of the transition process, it is set out very clearly. We have allowed them 18 months, which again, without exception, every one of the municipalities agreed was a more than adequate period of time for them to go back and review their current development charges regime, go back and review the specific needs that the growing portions of their community face in terms of the implementation of new hard costs and soft costs and go back and factor this into the mix of the Who Does What changes, of the fair taxation, of the reforms to the farm tax rebate and woodlot rebates. All of those things have to be factored into the equation that municipalities will have to keep in mind in those 18 months.

Again, every one of those municipalities has come back and said that they believe that is enough time for them to do that appraisal and to make sure that there is a transition period that deals very fairly with the developers, who have invested their money in a piece of land. They only profit if Ontario profits. They only profit if a new building is built, which creates jobs in construction and which houses new people, whether it's an office building, whether it's a single family home or whether it's a factory.

There has to be a recognition that there must be fairness to the developers, to those people who have made that investment in the land which is going to be affected by these charges. The municipalities have, as I say, en masse indicated that 18 months will give them that opportunity and will give the developers the opportunity to ensure that their investment is protected and that the ultimate development of that land will be done in a cost-effective manner, recognizing the true impact that any new development will have on the community.

I would also like to point out some exclusions in the bill, again recognizing that this was something that involved considerable debate between the province and AMO. We had the opportunity to flesh this out in great detail and make sure that a broad-brush approach was not taken, that we were able to address this with a great degree of specificity, so some of the ineligible services they have agreed should be excluded from being covered by development charges include the provision of cultural and entertainment facilities.

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For example, if someone were to construct a new O'Keefe Centre or even some of the smaller theatres and halls that have been built in communities such as my riding of Scarborough East, that would not be appropriate. It would also include museums, other theatres and art galleries, but it very specifically does not exclude public

libraries. We recognize that is an integral part of both the education system in this province and the services municipalities traditionally provide from their property tax base.

It is critically important, we believe, to the future of this province, as we develop literacy rates and numeracy rates among our students that allow us to compete for jobs in the 21st century and at the same time ensure that people of all ages have access to informative and educational reading material, that the development charges continue to be available to fund those worthy causes.

Development charges cannot be used for the provision of tourism facilities, including convention centres. I'm sure everyone in this room is very familiar with the extraordinary expansion to the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre which is currently being undertaken. If my memory serves me correctly, a total of \$170 million is being invested by the various levels of government in that expansion. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind, or the minds of any of my colleagues or any of the politicians at any level of government that put that funding in — our congratulations to all those who had that vision — that the expansion will bring more tourists, will bring more business to Toronto. There will be spinoff benefits that are very significant.

Having said that, it is certainly not something that is in any way related to the construction of a new house in Scarborough or North York or Etobicoke. Clearly it would be inappropriate to in any way burden that community and those new homes with development charges to create a convention centre.

Over and above that, one could think of any number of other tourist facilities in municipalities across Ontario. In the great town of Kenora I know they've got a municipal marina, a tremendous opportunity to promote tourism within a community, but in no way could be seen to have a relationship in terms of its cost and its ongoing costs to the construction of a house somewhere in the periphery of Kenora.

The third exclusion is for the acquisition of land for parks. As you know, most communities already assess a separate levy against developers specifically for parkland and most developers are offered the opportunity to give cash grants in lieu of land or, again at their choice, to deed land itself.

In my riding of Scarborough East we have a group of developments under way that will total 1,600 homes. The contribution to Scarborough's park budget would allow Scarborough right now to acquire somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20 to 22 acres of land at current market rates. Clearly there is not a need for development charges to top up that existing provision.

There is also in there, over and above the cost aspect, a recognition that if Scarborough, to use that example, were to create a new park, it would be to the benefit of every one of the 550,000 people living in Scarborough. Given that most of our parks are strategically situated on major roads, or in some cases on the waterfront, their appeal is even broader than the population of Scarborough. It crosses all the artificial political boundaries that currently exist within Metro Toronto, and in fact out into Durham and York and the other regions as well.



It also excludes the use of development charges to provide for a hospital. You will be aware that in this province we have increased the expenditures on health from \$17.4 to \$18.5 billion in our first two years of office. A significant portion of that money has been dedicated to the funding of hospitals. More than just the traditional, "Open another hospital because it's an election year," it is hand in hand with a very intensive appraisal of what services should be provided, at which hospital, and the service integration and distribution within and without the actual buildings that we know as hospitals. We have, on a city-by-city basis, recognized that in many cases there is a need for the provincial government to contribute funds for the redevelopment of hospitals.

If my memory serves me correctly, Windsor was recently the beneficiary, I think it was of \$48 million worth of grants to give them two absolutely world-class hospitals, replacing the three hospitals that currently exist and which are somewhat dated and in some cases inadequately equipped.

So we think it is inappropriate that hospitals be funded from development charges. We think it's more important that because this hospital is something that is used by all citizens in a community, other forms of payment be used to both create the hospital and cover the ongoing funding.

In the course of discussing this bill with AMO, we added another important exclusion and that was for the provision of waste management services. We have, in concert with the municipalities, convinced them that the provision of waste management is something that must be managed on a municipal-wide basis, that it would be totally inappropriate to fashion specific waste management services just to the new community, and that any municipality must approach the important issue of waste management and recycling with a view to a concerted effort and delivering the most efficient and effective means of disposing of that problem as possible.

We do not believe that to single out the new home or the new building that's being created is an appropriate way, to deal on a piecemeal basis with waste management. Instead there are any number of new technologies, any number of new options that are constantly being made available to municipalities across Ontario. We're confident that with the tools being provided to them in terms of the changes in the funding relationship, the changes in service delivery, the municipalities across this province, recognizing best practices, will find the waste management service that best suits the needs of their community, regardless of whether they are a village, a town, a city or a region.

We have excluded as a use of development charges the provision of headquarters for the general administration of municipalities and local boards — phrased another way, city halls. There are any number of examples across Ontario and I don't want to single any one of them out because, while they may have at the time inflamed some sensibilities, the fact of the matter is the municipalities operated totally within the context of the existing bill and I don't think they should be unduly vilified for that.

Instead I think the public sentiments that rose up at the time of those funding decisions, which in large measure

fell on deaf ears in the Legislature at the time, have been noted. The municipalities have recognized that city halls offer services that are to the benefit of every single citizen in a community, regardless of the size of that community, and it is extraordinarily inappropriate to ask for the funding to build a new city hall and place that on the backs of a relatively few developers who have come forward to create jobs, to create investment, to help stimulate our economy, to be part of that rebuilding. We don't think it's appropriate for someone to be able to get a new city hall on the backs of those people who are taking that risk, who are making that investment in Ontario.

Quite frankly, we have built in here the ability that other services that may come up in the future, as provided in the regulations and in concert with discussions with the association of Municipalities of Ontario, may or may not be covered by development charges in the future.

I guess some of the other important issues we'd like to deal with this evening are the methodology for determining development charges. Again we have, in concert with the municipalities, walked through this process in such detail and with such specificity that they will all be able to operate within the letter of the law, they will all be able to develop a framework of fees that is clear to the people who are making those investments, that is clear to other taxpayers in the community, that is clear to the civil service within the municipality, and that will certainly be clear to our staff in Municipal Affairs and Housing.

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The methodology that was selected: First they must estimate the anticipated amount, type and location of development on which development charges can be imposed. They must then match that up with an appraisal of the increase in the need for service which is attributable to the anticipated development. That must be estimated for each service to which the development charge bylaw would apply.

The estimate may include an increase in need only if the council of the municipality has indicated that it intends to ensure that such an increase in need will be met. In other words, to simply say that the construction of your new shopping centre, the construction of your new housing subdivision, will put a new burden on our library system and the new people that will be moving into your subdivision will increase by 10% the expected demand on our libraries is fine, and that's an important step in the methodology, but there must be a concurrent commitment by the municipality to increase the library by that 10%. In other words, no municipality can use the excuse of increased demand to profit from the fees unless at the same time they absolutely make the commitment to turn those funds around and create those investments in improved services in the community, to create those investments in jobs, to create those investments in growth in Ontario.

The determination may or may not be governed by the regulations in here, but in any event, it must be stated. There must be a plan articulated to the developer that builds in a timetable outlining exactly when and where those new services will be provided.



The estimate must not include an increase that would result in a level of service increase to the point that exceeds the average level of service provided in that municipality over the 10-year period immediately preceding the preparation of that estimate. This is critically important, because again it would be extraordinarily inappropriate — but unfortunately it has occurred in the last decade — given the time we have had to appraise this fee, given the effort that has been put into negotiating this bill, the negotiations between the municipalities, the province and the development industry, to exploit the ability to assess development charges to create a higher level of service than existed before the new development was created.

Let me give you an example again. If the per capita square footage of the library system in a community had been, just to pick a number, one square foot per capita, but the new development coming in is told that we will require you to make a contribution that will allow us to create a new library that will have five square feet per capita, clearly that is a very different standard than that to which the municipality has traditionally operated. Clearly it is exploiting the option of assessing this fee and clearly it is placing a burden on that developer that has not been placed on the existing taxpayers, that has not been placed on all the other people in that municipality who have been using those libraries for the 10-year period in question.

We think it is absolutely essential that the municipality have the ability to make sure the investment equals its traditional spending levels. We're not suggesting for one second that services be reduced as a result of new developments coming in; far from it. We are all municipal taxpayers as well. We are all users of municipal services, every one of us in this chamber, our families and our neighbours and friends. Every one of us recognizes the importance of municipal services, even more so once we are through the Who Does What initiative and we've rationalized which level of government delivers which service. Those that are funded provincially we will have absolute responsibility for. Those which are funded by municipalities clearly must have the tools at their disposal to maintain the service level.

Having said that, we don't think it's appropriate to stymie development, to stifle new growth, to stifle investment by providing a higher standard than has traditionally been met. Having said that, if a municipality wants to recognize that its traditional funding of all libraries has been inadequate, nothing in this bill prevents them from setting that higher standard, increasing the property tax appropriately on the existing portions of the municipality and concurrently applying those higher property taxes once people move into the new homes or the new shopping centre.

I'll pause to recognize the change in the Chair, and I certainly won't repeat myself because I know the members have been listening attentively throughout the first few minutes of this discussion, unless of course that is your wish, Mr Speaker.

Clearly issues such as this I think indicate the degree to which we have —

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bill Murdoch):** A point of order, member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** Speaker, I was hoping you would check to see if we have a quorum this evening.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Scarborough East may continue.

**Mr Gilchrist:** It is extraordinarily inappropriate that the member for Windsor-Sandwich was not a product of our new reformed education system with numeracy skills that would allow her to add on her fingers and toes and realize that we had far more than the 20 members required to maintain a quorum. But we'll move along.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gilchrist:** Couldn't figure out — you had to take your shoes off first. Indeed.

Let me come back to the process, because I've spent some time talking about the protections that are being built in there that go both ways. They protect the existing taxpayers but also protect those that want to make that new investment.

Let me just continue on with some of the process. A development charge bylaw may only be passed within the one-year period following completion of that study I mentioned earlier. In other words, a municipality can't use five-year-old or 10-year-old, out-of-date information to determine the costing of a library service or fire services or police services or any of the other absolutely essential services they deliver. It must be done in a timely fashion. That's only common sense.

A one-year time frame allows them to undertake the normal process within a municipality without any undue haste, to ensure that there is public consultation. In fact we have built in an absolute requirement that this is not something that could be passed in camera or behind closed doors. They must hold at least one public meeting. They must give at least 20 days' notice of the meeting or meetings in the manner of persons or organizations prescribed, and that would certainly involve all the taxpayers in the community. They must ensure that the proposed bylaw and the background study are made available to the public at least two weeks prior to the meeting or, if there's more than one meeting, prior to the first meeting.

I think everyone would recognize that this ensures that every taxpayer — every existing taxpayer as well as everyone who has an interest in a piece of vacant land or an old run-down property that they're hoping to re-develop or quite frankly just someone who has an interest in investing in a community but has not yet taken that first step of buying the land or the property — will know that there is a proposal outstanding to put in place or to change the existing development bylaw.

They will also be guaranteed the opportunity to give their thoughts on that matter, to comment on the specifics of any proposed bylaw at a public meeting, and they will have full details provided to them in plenty of time for anyone to make an informed appraisal of that bylaw, compare it with the status quo, compare it with surrounding communities, to seek some guidance from their local MPP to assist in determining whether the proposed bylaw conforms with the spirit and the letter of this law and is



providing necessary funding without extraordinary excesses over and above what will actually be required in the provision of any new hard or soft services.

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Beyond that, the community, as individuals or in any group, may appeal the decision even after they have had that public hearing and the council goes back and in their wisdom amends or passes as originally proposed the development charge bylaw. Any person or organization may make an appeal —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if the parliamentary assistant could advise the House whether this speech has been authorized by the minister, whether the minister has authorized this filibuster.

**The Acting Speaker:** You'd have to discuss that, but I don't think it's a point of order at this time. Thank you, though, member.

**Mr Gilchrist:** The witticisms of the member for Kingston and The Islands never cease to amaze me. We'll attribute it to the late hour.

If I may continue without such frivolous interruptions, it's extraordinarily important to note that even after that council passes that bylaw, there is nothing preventing any individual who disagrees with any or all of it to challenge that and to take it to the Ontario Municipal Board, by filing with the clerk of the municipality on or before the last day for appealing that bylaw a notice of the appeal setting out the objection to the bylaw and the reasons supporting that objection.

As you're well aware, the Ontario Municipal Board is a creation of this province that is uniquely charged with individuals with a great depth of experience in terms of planning matters who will be able to assess the merits of any appeal and will presumably in their wisdom rule accordingly. The Ontario Municipal Board may dismiss any appeal in whole or in part; it may order the council of a municipality to repeal or amend the bylaw in accordance with the board's order; or may itself repeal or amend the bylaw in such manner as the board may determine, and it may do that unilaterally.

Having said that, there are some limitations on the Ontario Municipal Board's power which I think are appropriate, recognizing that at the end of the day municipalities are responsible to all their taxpayers and are responsible for trying to seek balance between the competing interests of the existing residents and any new developers.

Some of the limitations on the power of the OMB are that they may not increase the amount of the development charge that will be payable in any particular case. I think that's a very important point to emphasize. They can go down, they can maintain it, if that is their considered opinion, but in no eventuality may they turn around and say, "As a result of your appeal, we're going to hit you even harder and we are going to allow that charge to be increased." I think that will ensure people approach appeals of these development charges with some comfort that they won't have double jeopardy.

They may not remove or reduce the scope of any exemption the municipality originally built into a development charge. In other words, if a development charge

has exempted churches, for example, the OMB would not have the power to consider that exemption inappropriate. Those are things that the municipality, recognizing the responsibility it has to its taxpayers and the responsibility it has to fashion the shape of that community and its composition, will keep in mind when granting any exemptions. It is very important that the OMB not be allowed to override that local decision.

The OMB may also not change a provision for the phasing in of development charges in such a way as to make a charge or part of a charge payable earlier, again a very important point. As a result of appealing something, if you have taken a position that the council was perhaps somewhat excessive in the fee they've charged, if you think they may have used out-of-date data, if you think there are any number of issues which deserve further scrutiny and which you would therefore like reviewed by the OMB, it would be very disconcerting to someone to know that as a result of raising that concern with the OMB they might find themselves in the jackpot of actually accelerating the time at which they would have to pay a fee. The deadlines originally built into any charge the municipality might assess in a bylaw should be sacrosanct and cannot be moved up.

Similarly, they cannot change the date on which the bylaw will expire. In other words, if a municipality has said, perhaps tied into their every-five-years review of the official plan in that municipality, that it is appropriate coincidental to that to review every five years their development charges bylaw, clearly it should be left to the decision of the municipality to put in that sunset review, if I can use that phrase, and allow them the opportunity to bring back before their voters and before their taxpayers all the details of that development charge in such timely fashion as they themselves may deem appropriate.

Having said that, it's clear to most people that when you take those exclusions out of the mix, the things the OMB can rule on are the legitimacy, the validity of the information on which the municipalities have based their decision; they may rule on the pure math, the calculations that have been done; they may rule on the applicability of whether against a new service there would be a demonstrated impact; and that the municipality has provided the necessary assurances that once the fee is paid those dollars will be turned around and put into the creation or expansion of the relevant service.

All those things are very valid points for the OMB to consider. As we have heard in discussing any number of bills in this Legislature, there must be that opportunity for sober second thought. In this case there is no body in the province more ably equipped to deal with planning issues and issues involving municipal services than the Ontario Municipal Board.

Let's deal with some of the process if the OMB did decide there were reasons to critique the original development charge bylaw put forward by a municipality. I would point out that section 18 of the bill says, "If the Ontario Municipal Board repeals or amends a development charge bylaw or orders the council of a municipality to repeal or amend a development charge bylaw, the municipality shall refund, in the case of a repeal, any



development charge paid under the bylaw" already. In other words, one need not be concerned that sometimes OMB hearings can take a number of months to schedule.

We would never counsel, nor I'm sure would the members opposite, that anyone fall into arrears in terms of their payment of any tax that is assessed by any level of government. Having said that, there is certainly nothing wrong, if you disagree with the fees, the taxes set whether by the province, the municipality or the federal government, with taking your appeal to the appropriate level. In the case of someone who has paid the original assessment and who has subsequently then proven, on review of the OMB, to have been correct in their assumption that the fee was wrong, they will be guaranteed that any charge they've already paid would be refunded.

If a municipality is required to make a refund, it shall do so within 30 days after the board's order, and, if the OMB orders the council to repeal or amend the bylaw, within 30 days after appeal or amendment by the council. The OMB can either do it directly and start the 30-day clock or, if it asks the municipality to undertake a repeal, 30 days from the date on which the municipality effects that change the refund would be payable.

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You're also protected if you are someone caught in that situation, because the municipality shall pay interest on an amount it refunds at a rate not less than the prescribed minimum interest rate from the time the amount was paid to the municipality until the time it was refunded.

It's clearly appropriate, as we go through this bill, to remind you that all these sections of the bill were done in concert with representatives of an organization that represents almost every municipality in the province. In fact, when you overlay AMO with the GTA mayors and chairs, most of the larger municipalities that are not members of AMO are caught in that second group. It is really appropriate, we can't mention enough, that the bill we are bringing forward to you now on which we have moved third reading has met the test. It has met the standards set by the municipalities across this province. It has convinced them of the importance of working together in fashioning these legislative changes.

I must say, as we look at some of the other issues we face, whether it's the Tenant Protection Act or whether it's the WCB reform, we can only hope that others who come forward to the public hearings and who make their submissions, either orally or in writing, adopt the same positive and creative attitude of AMO and the GTA mayors and chairs and have as their goal genuine improvement in the legislation.

I hardly have to tell you that when bills are tabled for first reading and even after second reading, they are only drafts, they are only proposals, they are only the first kick at the cat, as it were. It is not only appropriate, it is expected that there would be any number of amendments to the bill. It is my experience, in the two years I've been privileged to serve in this House, that aside from the most routine or housekeeping bills that have come forward, every single piece of government legislation has seen amendments, in some cases totalling in the dozens and, in at least one case I can think of, over a hundred

amendments. In some cases, those amendments arise without even public hearings; they arise from written submissions and comments people have made.

Bill 98 is very much a reflection of that process. It is very much a reflection of the fact that the bill was brought forward for first reading back on November 25, seven months ago. The municipalities have clearly had the time to do a thorough review and they have committed that review.

With that, as I'm having all sorts of notes handed to me here —

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** There's so much more to say.

**Mr Gilchrist:** There's so much more to say, to the member for Fort York, so much more. I know the member for Fort York gets frustrated when his House leader almost invariably takes the 90-minute leadoff speech, and of course the same is true in the Liberal ranks. There are very few opportunities for the member for Fort York to have full ability to express his point of view on Bill 98 or any other bill.

A quick review of Hansard tells us that day after day after day it's the same few members on the other side who ever get a chance to speak. I hope they approach Bill 98 in the context that on this bill and all other bills, they will have a greater opportunity to speak. More members will speak to bills; more bills will make it through this Legislature, particularly private member's bills and the budget bill.

With that, I know we've had an opportunity to give full debate during second reading. It has been my pleasure to remind people of the merits of Bill 98, the Development Charges Act, an important and integral part of our municipal reforms, an important part of our goal of rebuilding the economy of Ontario, an important part of turning around the affairs of this province so that once again we are second to none in North America as the place where people want to invest, create jobs and come to live.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I'm pleased to make a few comments on the member for Mississauga South's — oh, Mississauga East.

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** He's from Scarborough East.

**Mr Crozier:** Scarborough East? It's obvious he should get up and speak more, because I don't know where he's from.

In any event, I was listening. What interested me most is that the intent of this bill seems to be, in general terms, that municipalities can't be trusted. When I was mayor of Leamington we had development charges. We had to be able to justify those development charges, whether for hard services or soft services. For someone to then come to the point in provincial government where they're going to start to tell municipalities what they should do, what they can do best and what they can't do best, is rather strange to me. Municipalities, as far as I'm concerned, have a much better record than the provincial government.

The provincial government is now \$100 million in debt and that's rising every day; it's going to be \$120 million



in debt before this government is through, and they've had to borrow every cent of it. Yet they're going to tell municipalities, "You don't know how to run your affairs." That rings strange to me, and therefore I consider everything this member has said this evening to be somehow not in favour of municipalities. I think the municipalities should take some offence at that, because they can run their affairs very much better than the provincial government has done in the past and plans to do in the immediate future.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** It was an interesting hour and 10 minutes, to say the least. The member for Scarborough East, with very short notice at the beginning of this whole debate, scrambled around trying to find some notes to speak on this particular bill. I want to congratulate the member for Oxford for having given the member for Scarborough East so many good notes and such good understanding of and briefings on the bill. We tried to assist as best as we could. We called a couple of quorum calls to make sure the member for Oxford, the former parliamentary assistant, actually got a chance to give him notes. But, to his credit, the member for Scarborough East didn't do a bad job. He picked up on the cues and he took off on it pretty quickly. He wasn't too, too bad.

The other thing is that these guys sit there on the one hand and say: "We want to download everything on to municipal governments. They don't know how to make decisions. We're going to do it for them. They're wasting the taxpayers' money. They've got to be more accountable." On the other hand, it's a totally different position. They're coming from one side and going to the other on these issues. It tends to get a little confusing to people.

I would say in the 50 seconds I have left that it was an interesting point the member for Scarborough East made when he said, "We wouldn't want people making decisions in this House based on 20-second sound bites." The rule changes in this House will be equivalent to giving a 20-second sound bite to members having to make decisions on bills that are far more complex than the Development Charges Act. I would say to the member across the way, that is a good example of why we need to make sure we have ample time in the House to look at bills, both to criticize and to praise, to try to find better ways of building legislation, and yes, even more important, giving the media the opportunity to get the information so they can report to the people back home so that people can make better-informed decisions in the end.

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**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I want to congratulate my colleague the member for Scarborough East on his fine explanation of the Development Charges Act, Bill 98.

First of all, I want to correct the record of the member for Cochrane South, his indication that I was the former PA to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Unless he knows something I don't know, I'm still there as of today.

I had the opportunity to sit through all the committee hearings on Bill 98, the Development Charges Act, and heard the concerns of the municipalities, the developers and the home buyers alike as to what they thought was wrong with the bill as it came forward from second reading to third reading.

The main item the municipalities were concerned with has been addressed ably by my colleague: the issue of copayments for municipalities, that they would have to pay the 10% reduction on the hard services and 30% on the soft services to the development industry and inadvertently to new home buyers. They had very grave concerns about that and that's why we changed the bill, amended it so there no longer would be that reduction. They now can do the development charges on the total cost of the hard services and they must give a reduction in the actual cost attributed to development charges on soft services.

There was also grave concern by the development industry and new home buyers as to the eligible services. There were a great number of services they did not deem should be eligible for development charges and, as my colleague mentioned, we have removed a number of those.

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

I want to caution the member for Fort York. I just mentioned earlier this evening that pagers are out of order.

**Mr Bisson:** Pages are always in order.

**The Speaker:** Not pages, pagers.

**Mr Marchese:** How would you know that?

**The Speaker:** I heard it. I'm getting annoyed at hearing pagers go off all the time.

**Mr Marchese:** Who is snitching on me over there?

**The Speaker:** Actually, there's no one snitching. I heard it. I tell you the member for Cochrane South didn't say anything to me.

Questions and comments?

**Ms Castrilli:** What to say about the tirade the member for Scarborough East has been on tonight? This sounds very much like more of Big Brother. Here's a government that thinks it can do it best for everybody. Whether it's injured workers, whether it's teachers, whether it's doctors, they're all within their sights, and now municipalities. It wasn't enough that they were downloading all kinds of things on to municipalities without any benefit to them. Now they are also going to tell them what they can do with development charges.

Let me tell the member for Scarborough East and members of this House that there are municipalities that are mature, local, autonomous governments that respond very well to the needs of the local communities and they need no assistance or dictates from the provincial government to be able to do their work well.

Let me just cite you the example of my own municipality, the city of North York, arguably one of the best-run cities in Ontario, if not Canada, a city that boasts some \$2 million in reserve, a council that is very much in tune with what is going on with the local citizenry, a council that is universally applauded by the citizens for its commitment to the taxpayer and the taxpayer's dollar. It has not increased taxes for the last three years. They need no advice from this government as to how to conduct their own business.

I say to the government members and in particular to the member for Scarborough East, as well as to the members from North York right here: Take your hands out of the pockets of municipalities. That goes for the municipalities north of Toronto as well, just for the



member across the way. Take your hands out of the pockets of municipalities. Allow local government to do its job. It's what you promised during the election. Keep one promise at least.

**The Speaker:** Response, the member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for their comments in response to our discussion of third reading of Bill 98.

Just a couple of very quick points. The member opposite from Cochrane South had used the term "downloading." Of course it isn't downloading; it's a wholesale restructuring of the relationship between the municipalities and the province. We are taking costs, we are transferring costs; there will be a tradeoff. At the end of the day there will be a new ability for both the province and the municipalities to recognize the needs within certain services and to address those needs, because they'll have exclusive and sole funding responsibility.

At the same time I think there's no doubt that the member opposite will recall his own comments, when you were proposing rule changes in 1992, that if you can't make your point in 20 minutes, you shouldn't do it. Given that in the rule changes you're vilifying that we're going to give you 30 minutes, I hope you haven't changed the standard you took when you were in government.

To the member from the Liberal Party: I know you folks give a tremendous workout to your thesaurus over there. I hardly think it's a tirade to stand up here and defend the merits of a bill that has seen such full and honest and honourable debate involving all the stakeholders who will be affected by this bill, giving seven months to that debate and ensuring that at the end of that all the affected parties, all the major players, both the development industry and the municipalities, left that table prepared to agree that this bill best shapes the future for development charges. It is an improvement over the status quo. It focuses their efforts and their ability to assess this. I'm very confident they will continue to applaud the efforts of our government and that this bill will be an integral part in the rebuilding of our economy and our relationship.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I seek unanimous consent to split the time with the member for Essex South.

**The Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands is seeking unanimous consent to split the time with the member for Essex South. Is it agreed?

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** No.

**The Speaker:** No.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'm fully prepared to speak for the entire allotted time if need be. But I can't begin this discussion without reminding the member for Scarborough East that he has been the great defender of the new rules, which would limit debate to 40 minutes in a leadoff position. He spoke for at least 65 minutes on a bill that will make some substantial changes here in Ontario but it is certainly not the most drastic or the most comprehensive bill we've seen in this province.

When you compare it, for example, to a bill like Bill 26 that under the new rules could only be debated by the

leadoff speaker for 40 minutes, when you compare that to the size of this bill, there really is no comparison. You may recall that bill dealt with about 15 different ministries. Here we're only dealing with one ministry. It is a significant bill but it doesn't have that many different concepts in it, yet this member spoke for a minimum of 65 minutes.

Quite frankly, we were not sure on this side of the House whether the member for Scarborough East had decided to filibuster his own government's bill. We were of the impression that he was because of the manner in which he went on, which we're not used to on the other side of the House. You know as well as I do that normally on the other side of the House, on the government side, speeches are prepared for the ministers and the backbenchers and they are to read from those speeches to make sure they don't deviate from the word as contained in the Common Sense Revolution. In any event, I think he has clearly indicated why the House rules should remain the way they are.

I wanted to split my leadoff time with another member so we could move the debate along in this House, so we could get an extra speaker on during my opening 90 minutes. But if the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation doesn't want that to happen, that's fine. I hope you will keep that in mind, in the event that there's a motion somewhere down the line for closure, that the government was given an opportunity to get two opposition speakers in the leadoff time and they refused to do that. I think somewhere along the line that should become relevant, because they didn't want that to happen.

Let's start off with this whole notion as to whether or not AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which represents pretty well every municipality in Ontario, is in favour of this bill. I heard the member for Scarborough East mention on at least a half-dozen occasions that they liked this bill. Nothing can be further from the truth. It may be true that the bill as amended is not as drastic or as severe as the one that was originally proposed in first reading and that the municipalities are saying, "Yes, we like this better than what was there before," but time after time this government has taken the position that because municipalities or any group of citizens say a particular bill isn't quite as bad now as it was before, therefore these groups are in favour of the bill. It just isn't so.

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You may recall that when the original downloading bill came forward from the government, municipalities were going to spend an extra \$1 billion in new costs transferred from the province to the municipalities. Then later on that was amended as a result of negotiations at AMO and as a result of the tremendous human outcry out there, and it was eventually reduced to something like \$600 million.

The municipalities and AMO were saying, "Yes, we like this better than the original idea." The original idea would have downloaded the \$1 billion worth of services and would have probably increased the taxes in most municipalities in Ontario anywhere from 10% to 20% as far as real estate taxes are concerned. Sure, now as the result of the new downloading arrangements, since you're only transferring about \$600 million of that, the municipi-



palities are saying, "We like this better than what we had before." But it doesn't mean they like the concept or the notion of the downloading at all. They don't.

It's exactly the same thing with respect to this bill. What really bothers me, and I suppose I've heard this argument from the provincial government for over the last 25 years, is that each new government that comes into office makes a major statement at the first meeting the minister goes to of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which once again will be holding its conference this year at the Royal York, some time near the end of August, where it's been holding its annual conference for 50 or 60 years. The minister goes there in a grand performance. He says to all the assembled delegates, "We really want the municipalities to be a true partner with the provincial government in the way we govern, in the way we look after the people of Ontario as far as services are concerned." Every government has said that, no matter of which stripe.

I've heard ministers say that from the former Conservative government, from the former Liberal government, from the former NDP government and from the present Reform government. I've heard exactly the same comment every time: "We want to be full partners. We won't do anything without telling you beforehand and without discussing it with you. We won't make any changes without getting you on side." Then they merrily go along and do their own thing. The member for Essex South made an excellent point here tonight when he said, "Basically, what this bill comes down to is that this government doesn't trust municipalities." It's as easy and as simple as that. It simply doesn't trust municipalities.

You talk to the average municipal councillor out there, regardless of political stripe, and ask them what their local officials have told them about what the effects of all these changes, including the changes in the Development Charges Act, are going to mean to their local municipalities. Without exception every one of the ones I've talked to — they don't necessarily share my political philosophy — has said exactly the same thing; that is, that they're downloading more and more costs and services and are in effect at the same time taking more and more responsibility away from municipalities.

I think it's very interesting for this member to say: "There has to be some order to development charges. Development charges are inhibiting growth and prosperity." He said that on a number of occasions in his speech. Let's take a look at the actual figures. These are the current development charges for new detached homes in 1996. This is taken from an article in the *Toronto Star* on November 27: Vaughan has development charges of \$18,000 to \$19,000; Richmond Hill \$17,414; Markham \$17,200; Aurora \$16,728; Brampton \$15,886. That is just taking the top five according to the *Toronto Star* survey.

Which municipalities are these municipalities in relation to all the other municipalities in Ontario? They just happen to be the five fastest-growing areas in Ontario, where most of the residential building is taking place. You can go on and on and you finally end up with East York, where there are no development charges. I know in my own municipality of Kingston, the city itself, there are no development charges. They are also the

places where the least amount of residential development is taking place.

To talk about whether or not building is taking place, whether or not there's any relationship between that and the development charges that are being charged in those municipalities, is absolutely incorrect. I'm not for a moment saying these are the proper amounts that should or shouldn't be charged. The point is simply this: These charges have little to do with how quickly development has taken place in those particular areas. It obviously stands to reason that if you live in a municipality where subdivisions are being stamped out of the ground in a very quick, efficient and fast way, those are the areas as well where the municipalities need the most money to provide the services that people rely on.

When you take, on top of that, the well-known fact that basically your industrial and commercial assessment subsidizes the residential assessment in a municipality — by that I mean that the commercial and industrial projects pay, as far as the services in a municipality are concerned, more than their fair share as far as the services they get back for the amount of money they pay, and single family homes or duplex homes don't really pay for the fair share of services they enjoy in municipalities. That's a known fact. That's a fact that the industrial and the commercial tax base supports the residential tax base in just about every municipality that certainly I'm aware of in this province.

Let's see what all these municipalities had to say when this bill was first introduced. I'm reading from the same article, the *Toronto Star*, November 27, 1996, which is headlined "Building Charges Revamp Fires Up Foes, Defenders."

"Plans by the province to revamp development charges for new construction were alternately called a much-needed boost for the building industry and a costly business killer in interviews...yesterday."

It says, for example, "Mayor Hazel McCallion said the changes will mean huge property tax increases and a halt to growth in the greater Toronto area."

She stated: "It is going to have a major financial impact on the municipalities — on their capital budget — and a major impact on property tax."

"It's going to hit all municipalities hard, but it's going to hit the GTA more than any other part of the province."

As matter of fact she called an emergency meeting of the GTA mayors and regional chairs to deal with the issue.

The minister predicted that home buyers will save an estimated 15% of the cost of a new house before the revisions to the legislation. All I can say to that is there's absolutely no proof of that. There's absolutely no proof that if the development charges had been less, the price of the homes that were being sold was going to be less as well. One would hope so, but there's no proof of that at all.

Alan Tonks, who at that time was the chair of Metro Toronto — I'm not sure whether he still is in relation to the new position he has taken on with the province — stated, "It will hit some municipalities hard because they have been depending so much on development charges."

Let's take a look at another article that was written about the same time, November 29, in the *Globe* and



Mail, which is headlined "Ontario Fee-Cap Proposal Angers Municipalities."

"The Ontario government's proposal to cap the development fees municipalities can charge on new residential and industrial buildings has sparked a fierce response from some politicians in the suburban belt around Metro Toronto.

"Politicians in the booming suburban region, which formed the backbone of the electoral support for the Progressive Conservative government, are lashing back at Queen's Park for new legislation that would see municipalities picking up part of the tab for extending road, water and police services into new developments.

"Mississauga voted Wednesday to stop approvals of all building and development permits.

"We can't afford to let development go ahead," Mayor Hazel McCallion said yesterday. "...We don't wish to go into debt. We're managing our finances extremely well and we take exception to the interference [by the province] into the revenue of municipalities."

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I could read on and on, but the bottom line is that when first reading of this bill was given, the municipalities were dead set against it, AMO was dead set against it. Later on, after I guess the minister listened to them, Mississauga agreed to lift the development freeze because he agreed to set up a new consultation process.

Here's an article in the Toronto Star of November 29. It says: "York Region Joins Protest of Building Charges: Province's Plan Means Cities Pay More for New Parks, Libraries."

To listen to the way the government talks about it, in the areas that are being exempted from the development charges under the new proposed law, it is almost as if municipalities were taking this money beforehand and weren't going to expend it. What that really tells me is that he had absolutely no trust or belief in municipalities. It may very well be that in a particular development, with the development charges a municipality might get, it simply doesn't have enough money to, let's say, build a library or a cultural facility which presumably is needed for those communities.

We all enjoy the benefits of these enterprises, and in the long run I suppose one could say whether it comes from development charges that come from a whole group of projects that pay for one of these new cultural facilities or whether it comes out of the general tax pot really doesn't matter because it all comes out of the municipal coffers and therefore all of the taxpayers in one way or another pay for it in any event.

But the bottom line is that in this whole debate this government doesn't trust municipalities as to what they are going to do or how they deal with developers. Wouldn't it be a lot better if you were in a true partnership situation where you would simply allow the municipalities and the development industry, after the appropriate public meetings, to determine for themselves what would be the appropriate level of development charges in that particular case?

I can assure you, if the development charges are too high, the developers are simply going to leave and go to another municipality and develop there. I find it interest-

ing that here we have a government that states that it is very business-oriented, that it likes to look at the world from a businesslike view, from the view of supply and demand etc, that doesn't trust municipalities in the dealings municipalities have with developers in the same way.

If municipalities don't become competitive in new construction in the housing market, then the developers will go somewhere else where they will have a better competitive advantage in a situation where the development charges aren't as high. This notion that somehow municipalities look at this as a big cash cow and try to get every penny they can get from a developer is simply erroneous, because if it's too much, then they will leave and go elsewhere, will build somewhere else.

I can tell you, if that happens too often in a municipality, then the municipal councils will hear about that quickly enough from the current residents that don't see any development they can place in their municipality. I can assure you they will put enough pressure on that local council to change its policies.

Of course, the other issue that is closely tied into this — and I know I keep coming back to this, but it needs to be said, because a lot of the people in Ontario still don't think that this is happening. I suppose a lot of people will not really find out the effects of this for maybe another year or so, or maybe another two years, when their property taxes are going up, and that deals with this whole question of downloading.

Consider that in addition to the fact that they will no longer be able to charge for the kinds of items they were able to before in the Development Charges Act — in other words, they need to find money somewhere else to do the kinds of projects and activities and provide the kind of service municipalities are involved in — they are also going to be subjected next year to picking up additional costs for social housing.

The social housing amount in Ontario that will be turned over to the municipalities is \$890 million, and this is for all the non-profit, all the co-op housing that exists in this province, all the public housing that is owned by the Ontario Housing Corp. These units will be turned over to the municipalities. The individual contracts that exist between the individual non-profit and co-op groups and the province will be turned over to the municipalities and those municipalities will now have to start paying the annual subsidies.

That is a huge cost. It's my understanding, as I mentioned last week, that for the first year the provincial government, through the Ministry of Housing, will still be managing that process and will be sending municipalities the bill for the subsidy dollars. I can tell you in many municipalities the municipal councils and local taxpayers will have to start paying on contracts and subsidy dollars that exist between the non-profit groups and municipalities in situations where the municipalities have never been involved before.

These are contracts that were signed between the province and the non-profit groups, without any municipal input whatsoever. Municipalities are simply going to be handed that bill and they're going to pay it whether they like it or not. Quite frankly, I think that is a totally unfair situation.



The other one of course that has a much greater impact on the rural municipalities deals with the \$170 million, I believe it is, that will be transferred with respect to the farm rebate program. What's interesting about this is this used to be money that flowed directly from the provincial government back to the rural property owners. The local municipalities had nothing to do with this. They got their taxes in the normal way, and whatever rebate went back to the farms came through the province.

Now the local municipalities will have to pay for that, and particularly those municipalities, Mr Speaker, that are small and rural in nature. You and I know — if your part of the province is anything like my part in eastern Ontario — that the smaller municipalities, the more rural municipalities, simply do not have the tax base to be able to make these kinds of farm rebate payments to the local farmers, to the local farm properties.

I can tell you that this is going to be a major problem. In talking to some of the reeves of the county of Frontenac just in the past week and a half or so, they have been astounded by the amount of money they're looking for in their particular municipalities. I don't think people have been focusing on that before, and of course why they wouldn't have is that money used to come from the province before and it no longer does.

The other downloading of course is in the community public health area. It's kind of interesting that health in general has always been regarded as being the central provincial issue. It's the area where we spend the most money. I think right now over one third of the entire outlay of provincial funds is being paid out in the health area.

All of a sudden, out of the clear blue, community public health, which was taken over by the province some 25 years ago with the establishment of the health units all across the province, which was an attempt to bring some uniformity to make sure that each part of Ontario had the same kind of public health services and facilities available for its citizens, because there used to be back in the 1960s quite a disparity between the public health services that may have been available in one municipality over another municipality — for some reason, this is the one health expenditure that from now on will have to be paid for at the local levels.

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I can tell you that whether you look at it from the municipal viewpoint, which will have to be the payor to the health units, or whether you look at it from the health units themselves, it's a major problem. Most health units in this province I suppose are made up of representatives of probably — I'm thinking of my part of the province — anywhere from about 25 to 30 municipalities. Most of that money right now comes from the province. There is a local component to it as well, but it's a very small amount.

For those health units to determine exactly how much they get from each municipality and then to force each municipality to pay that, and to have the ability to force them to pay that when there is no reciprocity as such, has caused a great amount of concern within the public health community and the health units of this province. They would much prefer to be a provincial agency if for no

other reason than just the funding aspect of it alone. That's not the only reason why they should be handled by the province; it makes sense that they should be handled by the province. Every other health care service is provided by the province. Why should community public health not be part of that?

I can also tell you that municipal councillors, being the hardworking and dedicated individuals they are, are always going to be under pressure when it comes to choosing between either providing a hard service or a soft service. They're always going to be under pressure to provide the hard services rather than the so-called soft services, and there will be a tendency when the squeeze comes on the tax dollars to try to whittle down the public health areas, or at least the soft service areas, and not the hard service areas.

I was astounded to learn today in another area —

**Mr Crozier:** Absolutely astounded.

**Mr Gerretsen:** This was really astounding — in dealing with the Ministry of Transportation today, to find out that in eastern Ontario, in an area where I happen to live, in the area of Kingston, Belleville, Brockville and Smiths Falls, after January 1, 1998, there will only be three highways that will still be owned and operated by the province. Those are Highway 401, Highway 33, Highway 15, and I think Highway 62, which runs north of Belleville into Bancroft. Every other highway — Highway 41, for example, which runs from Napanee to Pembroke over an area of probably close to 200 miles, or Highway 38, which runs from Kingston to at least Bancroft —

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Development charges, John. Get back on development charges.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Yes, I am talking about development charges, because you are no longer, as a result of these changes, allowing municipalities to set their own agenda and to determine where they can get the money from to run their municipalities and provide the necessary services. That is what it's all about. On the one hand you're saying here you've got to look after all these services — and I could and probably will mention a few others, because I'm sure the people are interested in that — and on the other hand you're saying in the development charges area, "Municipalities, you can no longer charge what you think new development should be paying to finance a development."

**Mr Marchese:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe there's quorum. Could you check, please?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for Fort York, are you in your proper seat?

**Mr Marchese:** This is Fort York, right here, Speaker. I know you're giving them an opportunity to come in. That's okay, but you know, you could —

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm not giving them an opportunity to come in. I want to know —

**Mr Marchese:** Speaker, I'm in my proper seat and I ask you to check for quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** I will. Would you check if there's a quorum.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Kingston and The Islands.



**Mr Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate that at this time of the night it may be hard to count properly to see how many people are here, but I see the 20 members here and they're all very much interested in entering this debate at the appropriate time.

What's interesting is that you would think that since the province has downloaded all these provincial highways on to the local municipalities, maybe the province would just take that step it was contemplating doing at one time in Bill 26, and that is to give municipalities some other taxing powers. Maybe municipalities should have a portion of the gasoline tax.

**Mr Hardeman:** It's not in the bill.

**Mr Gerretsen:** He's saying it's not in the bill, but this parliamentary assistant, who is the real parliamentary assistant — I've got a great regard for Mr Hardeman. I served with him at AMO for a number of years and he's an ardent voice particularly for the rural municipalities. I know he's very dedicated and he's very well-meaning. If he were able to speak his own mind, I'm sure he finds it very difficult to have to endorse and to have to speak in public in favour of a lot of the principles that are coming out of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I cannot believe that anybody who has spent as many years at the local level could possibly agree with the notion that the province is trying to take powers away from the local municipality, and that's what these development charges are doing. That's what's happening, Ernie.

I can remember Ernie Hardeman quite well when he was a true spokesman for the local municipalities. He said that the local municipalities should be getting more power, they should be masters in their own domain. It's unfortunate that he has to play the role he has now. He's shaking his head and I understand how he feels. I think he knows about that as well.

There are all these areas where more and more responsibility or, let's put it this way, maybe not responsibility but more and more payment areas are being downloaded to local municipalities. In areas where municipalities have some say as a result of the Development Charges Act — I think that was passed under a very enlightened Liberal government back in 1989 — those powers are now being taken away to satisfy the development industry. That's really what it's about. The development industry obviously has gotten to this government and said: "We don't like paying for a lot of these items. We think municipalities are charging us too much etc. So, Mr Minister of Municipal Affairs and Reform government, would you please do something about it?" They did do something about it and they brought in this act.

What's interesting — and I notice that the other parliamentary assistant, I guess he'd be the urban parliamentary assistant, talked about this a little bit earlier — are the kinds of things municipalities cannot charge for. It's interesting to just go through that list. For those people who are following at home, it's subsection 2(4), and it specifically states —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** There are two members laughing there, but I will tell you, some people are following this debate with great interest. Do you know who may be following this with great interest? Your own taxpayers and your

own municipalities, because you see, if a municipality cannot charge as much as it could before in development charges, guess who's going to pay for those services? Your local taxpayers. That's what it's all about, because these are the items you're saying new development should no longer pay its fair share towards.

**2300**

Let's go through this list. "A development charge bylaw may not impose development charges to pay for increased capital costs required because of increased needs." The section itself — isn't this amazing? — acknowledges the fact that there are increased needs. There are increased needs in a municipality for these services, but, "A development charge bylaw may not impose development charges to pay for increased capital costs required because of increased needs for any of the following...." There's even an acknowledgement there that these needs are there. That's the amazing thing.

"1. The provision of cultural or entertainment facilities, including museums, theatres and art galleries but not including public libraries."

Every time this section has come up, somebody on the government side has said, "Isn't it awful that through development charges a new development has to put in a share towards a museum or towards a theatre or an art gallery?" I can tell you, most small urban municipalities and most large urban municipalities have museums or an art gallery or a theatre. We have the Grand Theatre in Kingston, for example, which is open about 300 to 320 days per year and it has got sellout houses. I know the member for Frontenac-Addington has been there. That theatre was saved by the local municipality. They paid money to buy the theatre and they renovated it. The entire community, depending upon what your choice in cultural events is, can go and see opera there, can see plays there, can see country and western. You can see just about everything.

The point is, why should new development not pay its fair share towards that? What is wrong with that? Tell me what's wrong with that. What's wrong with saying, "There's a new development of 500 houses being built," let's say in a community of 20,000 houses, "and Mr Developer, since the people you're building for are going to enjoy some of these artistic facilities, we want X number of dollars from you"? There's nothing wrong with that. It's a facility that's there now. What is the difference if the municipality has to say, "We're not getting it from the developer, but we're going to borrow this in bonds," or whatever instruments they want to use, "to build one of these facilities"? The taxpayer is going to pay for it anyway. There is no difference.

The government member, the not-so-renowned parliamentary assistant for municipal affairs, in his filibuster here earlier today made it sound like these developers are paying for the entire museum or the entire theatre or what have you, which isn't true at all. They're only paying for their fair share.

I can't for the life of me understand what is wrong with a municipality deciding. You've got to start on the notion that the municipality decides what it wants to charge for. I can tell you, if that municipality is totally unreasonable, the developers will go elsewhere. They'll



go to the next township. You don't trust local government, sir. That's what it basically boils down to.

Let's look at another exemption. This is the Development Charges Act I'm talking about. This is another thing they cannot charge for even though there's an increased need, as stated in the act, "The provision of tourism facilities, including convention centres." Just about every municipality of size has wanted to build some sort of tourist facility or convention centre, and many of them have built them over the years. Whether that money comes out of the public purse or whether it should be built privately is a matter we can discuss all day long and there could be different views on it. But if a municipality has decided to build that because it feels it's going to bring new business into the community, more dollars from the outside and therefore provide more jobs etc, what is wrong for a new development paying its fair share into that convention centre or into that tourist facility?

Why don't you leave it to the municipalities to determine whether it should or shouldn't happen? Why are you saying your so-called equal partner in this government partnership between municipalities and the province may not impose development charges even though there's an increased need?

The next one is, "The provision of a hospital as defined in the Public Hospitals Act." This is a very interesting one. We all know that over the last 20 or 30 years, most of the hospital funding has come from the province, and up until now anyway, we've had a pretty good health care system. What the government is currently doing with the restructuring, without setting in place in municipalities the community care services, is awful and it's very confusing to people, and I think that's greatly at risk. But let's admit that over the last 20 or 30 years most of the funding for our health care has been provided by the senior levels of government. I'll admit that. We also know that over the last five to 10 years many municipalities have been on fund-raising drives for major capital improvements in their hospitals.

In Kingston, for example, we had at one time a \$10-million campaign. Maybe the member for Frontenac-Addington can help me out. About 10 or 15 years ago we had a major campaign for about \$25 million or \$30 million that all went into public hospitals, because the province said it couldn't pay for the kind of improvements we felt we needed and the system needed. That's what happened. They raised that money.

I can tell you something: That kind of need is going to be there more and more in the future. As the province cuts back more and more in health care funding, that municipality, to ensure it's going to have the kind of health care facilities it wants for its citizens, is going to require more and more public fund-raising. There's no question about it.

Why would you put into the development charges law the fact that you cannot get anything from the developer towards the provision of hospital funding, particularly, as I've indicated before, when there's an increased need there? Bill 98 states that if there's an increased need in these areas, you may not get any of the money through development charges.

It's interesting. I was reading a quote a little earlier, and if you give me half a minute or even less, I can give you the exact quote.

**Mr Marchese:** Take your time, John.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I don't want to take too much time, because I know that people are watching the news and various other things.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum?

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Thank you very much. I was looking for this quote from the York County Hospital president Dan Carriere. He called the government's plan "ludicrous," especially in high-growth areas. He says, "This leaves our community in a no-man's land." That's what he said.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** And that was before they cut the business occupancy tax.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's right, the business occupancy tax. What are we talking about: \$1.06 billion that's going to be taken away from municipalities? I don't even want to talk about that because I don't want to bring too much doom and gloom to the people of Ontario this evening. I'll tell you, the more you read about it, the more anxious you tend to get about matters like this.

Obviously, York is a growing area, and the president of the York County Hospital thinks the government's plan not to allow development charges for the hospital in a fast-growing area is absolutely ludicrous. "This leaves our community in a real no-man's land."

It isn't only the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that doesn't like this law. The Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario is also opposed to the legislation. I can't think of a group of people in the province of Ontario that is more non-partisan than the clerks and treasurers. Mr Speaker, I disagree with you. You are shaking your head; you're not sure about that. I can tell you, I've always found that the vast majority of the municipal employees who are employed throughout this province take their work in a very dedicated fashion. They want to serve their local councils to the best of their abilities and don't like to play politics. Maybe some local politics from time to time, but not this kind of politics.

2310

They oppose this legislation for exactly the same reason: Why not leave well enough alone? Let the municipalities work it out with the developers. If they're being totally unreasonable, the development will go somewhere else.

I finally found that quote I was looking for earlier, and that is the minister's commitment to AMO. This is always a good one. He said: "We want to start a new partnership with the municipalities of Ontario. We want to be equal partners in the development of this province. You won't have to wait for the province to legislate every time you want to do something new." I'll get back to that in a minute. "This will give you flexibility to deal with a rapidly changing world, new developments and



things you haven't even envisioned yet. Municipal authority to tax and make laws will be broadened."

Certainly those of us who have taken a close look at Bill 98 wouldn't think this is anywhere near the kind of equal partnership that everyone was hoping for. In an equal partnership, you don't tell one partner, particularly in the high-growth areas, particularly in those areas that have had rather high development charges, because there's an awful lot of development work going on — you don't tell those municipalities, "You can no longer charge for that." You'd be much better off saying to those municipalities, "We trust municipalities to do the right thing." We all know this government doesn't do that, no question about it.

In the 43 minutes I've got left, I don't want to go through the formula that has to be followed to determine the actual development charges that may be imposed. I would just refer you, Mr Speaker, tonight as you go home, to pages 7 and 8, section 5 of the new act. This is going to take a mathematician to figure out, there are so many rules and regulations about how the charge is to be done and what you can charge for and what you can't, what you multiply by what and what you divide by what etc.

What kind of relationship is that with municipalities? Who came up with this? This is supposed to be the government that believed in fewer regulations. What happens? They come up with such a convoluted type of charge that I don't know who could possibly figure this out.

**Mrs McLeod:** That's what happens when you have it wrong in the first place.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Yes, they sure had it wrong the first time around. This government always seems to come out with a sledgehammer. It's kind of like when the Minister of Education — I will always remember one of the very first quotes I heard about this cabinet and this government, on my way back to Toronto within the first three or four weeks after the election in June 1995, when the Minister of Education was going to create a crisis. "If we create a crisis and we create all sorts of havoc, somehow we'll get everybody in line."

This is exactly what has happened here. Every municipality in the province was either going to freeze development or they were dead set against it. Then we back off. Then we call AMO in. Then we say, "Well, now, isn't this wonderful?" Yes, it is wonderful in relation to what was originally proposed, but it would be more wonderful if you simply hadn't done anything and had left it the way it was.

The largest amount of development in this province was still taking place, ironically, in the five municipalities that had the highest development charges. If development charges are supposed to inhibit development, why is the opposite true? It's because development basically will go where people find the quality of life they're looking for and where the developers can still make a dollar and where the housing is still affordable for those people, or else they wouldn't be buying it in the first place.

But there are other areas where this same downloading is taking place, where municipalities are being asked to supply more and more money come January 1, 1998. Let

me raise another area, which is very close to my heart, the ferry subsidies of \$15 million. I've got three islands in my riding, Amherst Island, Wolfe Island and Howe Island. Mr Vankoughnet, the member for Frontenac-Addington, is very familiar with it; he is already saying that in the next election I'll have two in that particular riding, and he, if he is the candidate there, will be looking after Amherst Island.

These are communities that have existed and have been developed with farms and with small communities for, I suppose, 150 to 200 years. There's a very great history attached to all these islands, there really is. On Amherst Island we have about 400 residents, on Howe Island maybe about 300 and on Wolfe Island about 1,200 to 1,300 people.

The province came along, Mr Speaker — you'd have an interest in this — about 30 or 35 years ago to these island communities and said, "We are a compassionate government." I think this was the government of John Robarts, maybe even before that: Leslie Frost. I'm not sure. "If you give up the ferry boats, we will supply the service from now on, but we also are going to do the hiring for those boats." I take it that at one time, operating the ferry boats was one of the main businesses on the island, going back and forth. That's exactly what happened in the case of Wolfe Island. MTO took over the boat, took over the ferry operation — there are two highways on Wolfe Island — and basically regarded the ferry as a sort of floating piece of highway between a highway on the mainland in Kingston, Highway 2, and the highway on Wolfe Island.

Wolfe Island has a tax base of about \$300,000 to \$400,000 and the ferry boat operation runs at a cost annually of about \$2 million. Do you know what the province did about six months ago? Do you know what it said to these people, who had lived there for generations in some cases, who had operated their businesses there, who had farmed the lands? They said, "Come January 1, 1998, we're not going to pay for those ferries any more."

I remember the last election. I did not do well in the islands. I won less than a third of the votes on all these islands. Do you know why? I can remember my then leader, the member for Fort William, having quite a discussion about this when she came to Kingston on one of the campaign trips. I had heard that we had about 15 different funding systems for all these boats all across the province, all the way from where people were paying nothing to situations where some boats were operated by counties, some by the township, some by MTO etc; they all had different systems. I said, "We've got to rationalize this."

My opponent in that election took a totally different approach. She put a great big sign on the island as people came off the ferry, and the sign said — I can still remember this, and I have the picture to prove it — "Mike Harris and Sally Barnes will never charge ferry fees." After that, it was kind of difficult for me to go from islander to islander and say, "I'm the best candidate here." They'd say, "You may be, John, but we're never going to get charged ferry fees if we vote for the Tories." That's exactly what happened. Then do you know what



happened? They voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Tories. I probably would have done so myself, heaven forbid, if somebody was going to guarantee me free ferry service.

2320

You may recall that they had said to the Premier in the House here, "You said you'd never charge for the ferry service." Remember what he said that day? I can't remember it exactly, but it was something like, "We're not charging for the ferries; we're giving them the boat at the end of the year." That came as a result of the announcement that was made by the Minister of Transportation that they were no longer going to fund ferry subsidies, that they were local services.

I can understand a local service if you have a tax base of, let's say, \$10 million and it costs a million dollars to operate the ferry, and yes, it could take a 10% tax increase to raise that money. But how are you going to do that in a situation where you're talking about a \$2-million-a-year operation when you've only got a tax base of about \$300,000? Those people would have to base their taxes on that island, Wolfe Island, eight times, I think on Howe Island it's something like six times and on Amherst Island it's about seven or eight times. As of today there has been no solution, and a lot of the people who have lived on those islands for generations — these are not tourists, by the way, there are some tourists but the vast majority of these people live there year-round — have been told: "Here is the boat at the end of the year. You look after it yourself." They simply will not have the ability to do that.

What bothers me about that more than anything else is that I was always under the impression and held the belief, and certainly all governments of Ontario up until now held the belief, that once you are in government, then you are there to govern all of the people of Ontario and you don't just say, whether it's 2,000 people or 20,000 people, "Well, I'm sorry, but we can no longer afford to have you here and we can no longer afford to pay for you."

What's next? Are we going to pick on isolated communities somewhere and tell them, "I'm sorry, but it costs too much money to run a road up to you"? Maybe I'm wrong. Yes, we are giving those roads away too, aren't we? That's the same thing, exactly the same thing. I almost forgot. It is being done to other communities as well.

It is the total unfairness of it all. I know there are people on the mainland in my riding that somehow take me to task and say, "John, why do you always talk about that?" I can tell you the reason I always talk about that is because it is so totally unfair. We have to recognize that when you're in government, regardless of which party is in government, you are there for all the people of Ontario.

That doesn't mean changes don't have to be made. I will admit that if I were not an islander and if I saw a boat that goes back and forth to the island and nothing was being charged, on the hour, every hour — a person could very easily come to the conclusion, "My gosh, shouldn't somebody be paying something for that?" But you don't just unilaterally cut them off and say, "It's no longer our problem."

I see the smirks of people in the House and staff people etc, but just place yourselves in that position, and I think that is totally unconscionable. No matter what happens after the next election or whatever, I will always maintain that view because it is simply not acceptable.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** That's another downloading, and it's only \$15 million in the total scheme of things. I suppose it isn't all that much but it's affecting people directly. I think we owe people a little bit more than that. We can tell them, "Let's sit around the table and let's discuss a new deal, a new arrangement; the old deal may be too expensive for the system to maintain and we can no longer afford it," all sorts of things. But you don't just unilaterally cut them off as if they were no longer part of this province and in effect become a burden on the local taxpayer. As I mentioned before, the local taxpayer simply cannot afford it. So there's another case.

Let's take this one step further. In the meantime the Minister of Municipal Affairs started a restructuring program. The restructuring program includes, as the parliamentary assistant well knows, the addition of the townships of Kingston and Pittsburgh with the city of Kingston. Most people are quite satisfied with it. Some people are not. There are some people in the rural areas of Pittsburgh and Kingston township who feel they would be better off in a municipality that is not totally urban, and I can understand that and maybe other arrangements could have been made.

But what is very interesting is that in these restructuring agreements that were signed there was a specific clause put in that the Wolfe Island ferry operation would never become part of this restructured municipal government arrangement. This was done I believe about two or three weeks before another branch of the government, the Ministry of Transportation, decided to no longer fund the ferry situation.

If those islanders had been given a choice before final restructuring arrangements were made between joining a much larger tax base or being totally left on their own, as they are currently, there may have been a different solution. I don't know; I think it's a local solution and they should certainly resolve that locally.

But to allow that kind of situation to happen whereby these island communities are now on their own and they don't have any alternative — as a matter of fact two of them, Howe and Wolfe islands, joined together, which to a certain extent makes the problem worse, because now you've got both islands with major ferry funding problems, with twice the problem that each one of them would have individually on its own. It is just another example of where the one hand of the government doesn't know what the other hand is doing. Certainly the Minister of Transportation should have been an integral part of the whole discussion with respect to restructuring.

We could talk about restructuring and some of its ramifications, but I can tell you that as of right now, in order to bring in a balanced budget next year, the new municipality of Kingston has to cut out \$32 million of the expenditures the three municipalities have had this year to arrive at the same tax rate that all the municipalities had last year or this current year. In other words, they



have to cut out \$32 million worth of services to come to exactly the same place where they are today.

What does that tell you? It tells you that at the municipal level once again they have clearly established and determined, as a result of these various downloadings I've talked about, that it's going to cost more money to the local taxpayer.

I could tell you all these people are good acquaintances and good friends of mine, but they're not necessarily Liberals and they don't necessarily feed me these figures in order for me to dump on the government. I would think that if anything, they're probably more Conservative inclined. But let me tell you they are not enamoured of this current government, because they realize, as many, many other municipalities have realized, that all this downloading is going to mean one thing: that either those costs will have to be raised through increased taxation at the local level, or alternatively services will have to be cut.

We don't know which one of the two it's going to be. Local councillors know they cannot go to the people of their municipalities with a 10% or a 20% tax increase, so what's going to happen? The services are going to be cut.

That is the sad truth of it all, and we've already given the figure as to how it's affecting other municipalities. I guess the property taxpayers of Ontario will know next year at this time what has happened as a result of this downloading. They'll have a much better idea than they do tonight. They will know whether the services in their municipalities have been cut or whether taxes have increased.

What's really happening is that the province is forcing municipalities to do an awful lot of their dirty work by making the kinds of financial decisions they themselves didn't want to make or they have made with the notion of giving a tax cut of 30% to people, which you and I know is going to mean only about \$245 for the person with an income of about \$25,000, about \$590 for an income of about \$50,000 and about \$2,500 for an income of \$100,000. You can clearly see that the tax cut is going to benefit the people who are better off. More costs are going to have to be paid by the local municipalities, so property taxpayers, rich or poor, will be paying those additional costs.

2330

Those are some of the things we're facing in this province. All these issues are directly or indirectly related to the Development Charges Act. They all affect a municipality's ability to run its business, to provide the best kind of service it wants to provide for its local residents.

I have a good feeling and a great regard for local municipal councils. I believe they are the level of government that is closest to the people. There is direct communication between the elected person and the residents. I think that's what helped to make this country great: the fact that you can live in a rural municipality and you know that your councillor or your reeve or your deputy reeve is no farther than one or two concession roads away. Of course that's all going to disappear in a lot of this restructuring.

This government somehow wants the people of Ontario to believe that the people who are really costing them

money in the whole system are local politicians. You and I know that most local politicians, particularly those who are not involved with regional government, make very, very little dollars — I don't know, \$5,000, \$10,000 at most. They certainly are not the cost of the system. They bring democratic accountability to the system; they bring the voice of the people to local decision-making. I dare say that a lot of people would say, including many people who serve in this House who have either served on local councils or school boards, that the kind of decision-making or how decisions are arrived at at the local level, in a non-partisan sort of way, may be a heck of a lot better than the way we're doing it here. That may just be the case.

I think, for example in what we talked about earlier tonight, that if there had been a real, true desire by the government to do something about the rule changes — and I notice that the government House leader is here — then he would have struck an all-parties committee with equal representation from each party and said: "Okay, let's go through the rules of this House, let's go through the standing orders right from beginning to end. How can we make the process more democratic? How can we actually improve on the way we do business in the House?" That I think would be to the benefit of all of us.

It was interesting that the members of the government side made it sound as if, "Well, the independent member has got more rights." Yes, he's got more rights; nobody said he shouldn't have those rights. Now we're going to vote on a budget. Well, I'm sure we'll all endorse that. Why wouldn't we vote on the budget? I'll be honest with you: I'm kind of surprised we don't vote on the budget. You certainly vote on a budget at every other level of government or organization that I'm aware of. So sure, we want to vote on the budget; that's fine.

The other interesting one is the private members' bills. I get a chuckle out of that one. Probably the members of the opposition would like more of their private members' bills to actually get to third reading. It's my understanding that usually government manoeuvring in committees etc does not allow opposition members' private bills to ever see the light of being approved by the House, but we would certainly endorse that. Something tells me that the reason most government private members' bills don't make it out of committee is that the government doesn't want it to happen.

I've seen some private government members' resolutions and private government bills come here and we voted on them and there wasn't a cabinet minister in the House. That tells me something. It tells me that yes, we've expressed the wishes of the backbench government members and the opposition, but the government doesn't want to take a position on that. I would ask the government backbenchers to maybe have a real discussion about why your own government House leader or your own cabinet does not want a lot of your own private members' bills to come before the House and be debated and given third reading, if appropriate. I think there may be a very interesting answer to that.

The government backbenchers may not like that particular answer because they may find out that some of their bills are in effect against government policy and that



the cabinet would not like to see the policy changed. So we give a private member's bill an opportunity to see the light of day, whether in opposition or in government, we make a bit of a news headline out of and then we let it die on the order paper. I think that's the way the government wants it.

I want to get back to the Development Charges Act. With all due respect to my colleague from Essex South, I may have to ask him to speak on this some other day because I know that as a former mayor of Leamington, he too has many interesting observations about this bill.

Let us just review once again, dealing with the Development Charges Act, what the Who Does What panel that Mr Crombie chaired advocated to the minister in a letter dated November 8, 1996. He states:

"The subpanel believes that the range of services and associated capital costs that can be included under the act," that is, the existing Development Charges Act, "are reasonable and fair."

Isn't that interesting? This is a former mayor of Toronto, highly regarded by the general public and by your government. Your government made this man head of the Who Does What committee. He's highly regarded, no question about it. He knows what he's talking about. He has seen government both at the local level and at the federal level. Your government set up this commission to look at the Development Charges Act, among other things, and he states — let's read it once again because we want to make sure you and the other members understand this as well as the people who may be watching:

"The subpanel believes that the range of services and associated capital costs that can be included under the act are reasonable and fair. "It recognizes that a number of technical/administrative amendments are required to improve the operational aspects of the act."

None of the issues I've talked about, or indeed that the parliamentary assistant talked about, has anything to do with the administrative, operational aspects of the act. They all have to do with what can or cannot be charged for and how we arrive at those figures.

What does Crombie go on to say? He says:

"Furthermore, current legislation provides a satisfactory process to ensure that the development charges policy is applied in a fair and open fashion." The process applies for public meetings and appeals to the OMB.

He goes on to say:

"Development charges are a critical and essential municipal revenue source for financing growth-related capital infrastructure. Any amendments to the act to reduce the scope or permitted level of development charges will mean higher municipal taxes or user fees."

Let me repeat that for the member for Lambton there.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** I'm listening.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I appreciate your being here at this hour and listening to this debate.

Any amendments to the current Development Charges Act "to reduce the scope or permitted level of development charges will mean higher municipal taxes or user fees." That's Crombie; that's what he's saying.

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**Mr Beaubien:** He has been wrong before, though.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Oh, he has been wrong before.

**Interjection:** Like the island ferry.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Yes, I must admit he was wrong on the ferry fee situation; he was certainly wrong on that. But he's talking about an act; he's not talking about particular money that goes to a particular municipality. He talks about it in general and he says you're wrong. He says, basically, as I indicated before, "Any amendments to the act to reduce the scope or permitted level of development charges will mean higher municipal taxes or user fees." It is also noted that "the permissive nature of the act does not obligate municipalities to impose a development charge."

Am I ever glad I read this, because the people out there may actually think that municipalities have to charge a development charge. They don't. It's permissive. This act is in effect tampering with the permissiveness municipalities currently have. If a municipality doesn't want to charge it — as I said before, most urban municipalities that are developed don't charge it. I understand Cornwall doesn't charge it. I'm not sure whether Peterborough charges it.

**Mr Beaubien:** Petrolia doesn't charge it.

**Mr Gilchrist:** North York doesn't charge it.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Petrolia doesn't charge it. Kingston doesn't charge it. It's totally permissive. Why not leave it that way?

"For these reasons, the subpanel strongly recommends" — not just recommends but strongly recommends — "that municipalities should continue to decide on the level of development charges in accordance with the act."

What nobody on the government side has indicated yet is, with that kind of a recommendation, who is putting the pressure on to change the act. We've already determined it's not the clerks and treasurers, because they're against it. It's not AMO regardless of what the member across is saying. AMO basically is saying, "This deal is better than the original deal you gave us," but they'd prefer not to have them. It is not Mr Crombie. It is not the general taxpayer because the general taxpayer is going to have to pay more for a lot of these items because the municipalities can no longer charge development charges in certain areas.

Who is it, then? I can only come up with one group. I think the member for Lambton knows the answer: the developers. I went through the list before of what municipalities cannot charge for, and I just want to go through it again because I missed a few of them. Remember, "A development charge bylaw may not impose development charges to pay for increased capital costs required because of increased needs" — so there's an acknowledgement in the act there's an increased need — "for any of the following:" — and remember, I talked about hospitals, acquisition of lands for parks, tourism facilities, cultural and entertainment facilities including museums, theatres etc. Then it goes on to say that it also cannot charge for "The provision of waste management services." It cannot charge for the provision of waste management services?

**Mr Crozier:** That is outrageous.

**Mr Gerretsen:** That is absolutely outrageous. I cannot think of an issue across the province — oh, thank you very much. I will not say anything bad about your



cultural facilities any more, because the Minister of Culture just passed me a glass of water. Thank you very much.

Anyway, the Development Charges Act says a bylaw cannot charge for "The provision of waste management services." There is no issue that is of greater concern to municipalities clear across this province than their waste management services. This has been an issue that has been ongoing for at least the last 10, 15 or 20 years, municipality after municipality. At one time, and I'm sure the parliamentary assistant will agree with me, I think there were something like 50 or 60 different studies going on in this province as to how municipalities or a group of municipalities could deal with waste management. None of them, as far as I know, came to satisfactory conclusions. Now we're saying, in one of the largest capital-requirement type of projects that municipalities get involved in, that development charges cannot be used so that a developer has to pay his fair share towards waste management services.

The members of the government will say, "Well, a developer shouldn't pay for a new sewage treatment plant." Nobody is suggesting that. All we're saying is, "Pay your fair share." Why shouldn't they pay, particularly when you consider that these are the major capital outlays required by municipalities?

The other interesting thing that happened just recently — I think it's Bill 107 — is that you have taken all the waste management and water facilities and you've now turned them, and all the debts attached thereto, over to municipalities.

I could go on and on because you talk about one thing and it leads you to something else. Why are you turning over all the water plants to the local municipalities? You'll say that 75% of them are already owned by the local municipalities. It's true. But the other 25% are in those small municipalities that simply did not have the financial capacity on their own to build the kind of facilities they have there. The province, the enlightened Conservative governments of the past, would come in and build these facilities and operate them for the local municipalities. That's how it used to be done.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** Yes, and you're very fortunate if your municipality paid for your own; our municipality did too. But there are smaller municipalities. It's like the island ferry service. They couldn't afford them. Enlightened governments stepped in and said, "Yes, you people too are residents of this province and you are entitled to the same quality of services that other municipalities are getting." Now you're saying to those smaller municipalities that couldn't afford to build them in the first place, "Here are the plans, and by the way, look after the debenture and debt charges as well."

The other item that cannot be charged for is, "The provision of headquarters for the general administration of municipalities and local boards." With all due respect, we've heard this argument: "Some municipalities are building these outrageous municipal halls etc. Isn't it horrible? We've got to put a stop to it. Development charges shouldn't be paying for that." I'd like you to name me one. There may be one. There may be two. But

I can tell you that local councils are accountable to their voters, to their electors. If the kind of municipal quarters they erect for the council itself are so outrageous, let the local people decide three years from now or two years from now whether or not they still want that local council in there as a result of the so-called outrageous decision they made.

To say in effect that a developer should not be paying, out of a particular development, the appropriate and fair development charges for this kind of facility, which are put in the pot with money from other developers so that at some point in time in the future you actually have enough money to build a facility such as a new city hall, why not? What is wrong with that? Absolutely nothing.

Then of course there's the catch-all one. This catches everything. I cannot understand how these municipal politicians — you've all been in municipal politics, you always had arguments with the province over one thing or another, particularly over those areas where the province could do something —

**Mr Beaubien:** You never had one.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Oh, I had them too — where the province in effect said, "Well, we can pass a regulation."

It says, "Other services prescribed in the regulations." In other words, "A development charge bylaw may not impose development charges to pay for increased capital costs required because of increased needs for...other services prescribed in the regulations." That could mean anything at all that happens in a municipality. Regulations which do not come to this House, which are not debated anywhere, which just go right out of the minister's office into the cabinet office, get signed and have the force of law, could include literally anything the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the equal partner with municipalities, decided on any given day municipalities should no longer charge for.

Why don't you at least do the honourable thing? Why don't you phone AMO tomorrow and tell them: "We're sorry, but we are no longer equal partners. We have the final say. You are still a creature of the province." At least do the honourable thing; tell the municipalities. Municipalities are just like people, they like honesty. Tell them exactly how you feel about these things. Don't tell them you're equal partners. For goodness' sake, we're less than two months away from another AMO convention. Mr Hardeman, I implore you, do not allow the minister to go down there and say: "We're equal partners. Isn't the world unfolding the way it should?" Do the honourable thing and say: "We've thought it all over. We can't trust you in everything. We are not equal partners. We have to tell you exactly what to do. We have to come up with formulas that three or four accountants couldn't understand." I would like the member for Lambton to give me a dissertation on exactly what clause 5 means, this funding formula for how you arrive at development charges. He couldn't do it. It clearly shows that municipalities, as far as this government is concerned, cannot be trusted.

2350

There's another section in the act that's interesting, and I wonder if you could give me an answer to this one. Why, in your legislation, are you prohibiting development



charges on industrial expansions that are less than 50% of the existing floor space? Give me an answer to that. I've got a 10,000-square-foot plant and I want to put a 4,500-square-foot addition to that. That is going to require more services, more sewer services, more water services, more parking, whatever. Why are you saying that municipalities, who should have ultimate control of what they charge for, cannot charge a development charge on that expansion?

Remember, development charges are permissive. Municipalities don't have to charge it. But you are denying that permissive legislation in this particular situation. In this section, you are saying that if you are developing your industrial plant by less than 50% of the current floor size, there are no development charges payable at all. Why?

**Mr Crozier:** Because the developers say so.

**Mr Gerretsen:** My friend from Essex South says it's because the developers say so. That's the conclusion I've come to as well, I must admit, because that's the only logical conclusion. We know it's not the clerks and treasurers. We know it's not AMO. We know it's not the general taxpayers. We know it's not the Crombie commission. We could just go on and on. It's none of those. It must be the developers, then. It's simply not fair.

In the last few minutes I have left — and there's so much to say and so little time to say it in. I honestly think we should expand this. I thank the Minister of Culture for her glass of water. It's too bad you took some of the time away from my friend from Essex South. You don't have a problem with me, but you may have a problem with him, because he was prepared to speak —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** Well, you were going to speak and then you weren't allowed to speak. That's too bad. That really is too bad.

Let me finish off by saying it is a total — can you say “falsehood” in the House? You can't say “lie.” You can say it's erroneous. It is totally erroneous to say this bill is endorsed by AMO. It's not true. AMO thinks this is a better deal than the original deal, but they would prefer that you just wouldn't pass anything like this. Crombie doesn't want to pass anything like this. None of the parties I've mentioned before want this passed. Why are you doing it? Why are you dumping and transferring all these costs to local municipalities?

We could be talking about the property assessment service because that's another matter being dumped on the local municipalities. If there's one group of government employees — many of them are currently government employees — who are totally befuddled because they don't know whether they're coming or going, it's the property assessors. You've contracted out a lot of these services in different areas to people who in some cases get one day of training, and they're now going to reassess our cities and our rural areas.

I'm sure you will have great faith in that, Mr Speaker. I wish them well. I'll tell you, once you have reassessment taking place, you can't win that one. The people whose taxes are going up will say, “You're the person who caused my taxes to go up.” People whose taxes go down as the result of reassessment will say, “I always

told you I paid too much.” It's a no-win situation. Now you're having people do it who, with all due respect, may not be appropriately trained.

I say to both parliamentary assistants, since they're still here, do the right thing. Phone AMO and tell them, “You're not an equal partner.” Also, withdraw this bill and let them decide the exact relationship they should have with developers and what they should and shouldn't charge for in their own individual municipal situation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Marchese:** I want to congratulate the member for having taken the whole time to give a great deal of detail to this bill. He needed that time, as I would have liked to have an hour and a half to speak to this bill, as opposed to the changes this government is making that will restrict us to a mere 40 minutes, which isn't ever sufficient time to deal with these kinds of bills.

I want to congratulate the member for Oxford and the member for Scarborough East. They're real soldiers at a time when the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs is beleaguered and tired and needs two parliamentary assistants to carry him through these two years that have been very difficult for this man. I praise them, because they are real troupers, those two, the member for Oxford and the member for Scarborough East.

But this particular bill is going to do very little for people, for communities and very little for homeowners. The government says they are going to get a good deal out of this, that it's going to make housing cheaper for a lot of people in those communities. I tell you it's not going to do any of that.

It's like the proposals Minister Leach made when he relaxed the basement drainage protection rules and eliminated full-height insulation requirements, which he said would save homeowners \$1,000 to \$3,000. The Canadian efficiency alliance did a study and said, “That isn't true.” Homeowners didn't save a cent. But the minister said they were going to save up to \$3,000, because the home builders and their developer friends, who met and lunched with the minister, said, “If you do this, homeowners will save a couple of thousand.” They didn't.

They're not going to save with this new bill either, Mr Speaker. I think you know that. I know the member for Oxford and the member for Scarborough East know that as well. I praise the member for that full hour and a half he took to give the details of this bill.

**Mr Hardeman:** I too want to congratulate the member for Kingston and The Islands for his rendition of the Development Charges Act. I think he also pointed out the need for the rule changes and the fact that the 40 minutes would be quite sufficient for the leadoff speaker. If any member of the House or anyone watching was to check the Hansard, I think we would be rather surprised if there was anywhere near 40 minutes of discussion related to Bill 98. The member did quite a job of speaking to a number of issues, but he did not spend 40 minutes speaking to Bill 98.

Also, in his discussion I noticed he said developers should pay their fair share. I agree that developers should pay their fair share and they should put in the streets and roads that relate to putting in their subdivision. But we



should remember that this bill and development charges do not apply to the developer but to the home buyers. It's very important to recognize that first-time home buyers would appreciate the ability to buy their first home. They do not need another \$12,000 or \$15,000 attached to that home for services they do not presently require nor may ever require in the future.

If they do, the ability of municipalities to tax for those services exists. They've done so in the past, and I see no reason why they would not continue to do that in the future.

**2400**

The member spoke at quite a length about the involved process of setting development charges. I would point out there are only two minor changes in the process of deciding what development charges should be in a community. They relate to the length of time; they must put the price based on a 10-year average as opposed to a single high year for the development charges. Also, they are restricted —

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Crozier:** There are few members of this Legislature who can speak with the experience of the member for Kingston and The Islands in regard to development charges as they relate to municipalities. I congratulate him tonight on his comments on this particular issue.

The fact has been alluded to that it took him an hour and a half, the full time he was allowed, and even then he was only able to cover part of what this really means to the municipalities in this province. I would have thought that the member for Scarborough East would set an example. If 40 minutes is all that's required in a leadoff, I would have thought the member for Scarborough East would have said all he had to say in 40 minutes. As I listened, he probably did say all he had to say in 40 minutes, but he just went on for another 20 minutes for our benefit, I'm sure.

What he did say this evening, I want to remind the municipalities in this province, is: "We don't trust you, municipalities, to set your own fees. We have trusted you in the past and you haven't done a good job, so we have to tell you what to do," Big Brother in Queen's Park, Big Brother in Toronto. Notwithstanding the fact that David Crombie said they needn't tinker with this, Big Brother in Toronto has to tell municipalities what to do. I agree with my colleague from Kingston and The Islands: If there ever was an instance where this government is unable to say to its municipalities, "We are partners," this is one of those instances where they are certainly not saying they're equal partners.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** I appreciate that, Speaker, but I'm quite prepared to make my questions and comments the next

time the government House leader calls this bill for debate, if you will take note that I have the floor when this is called again.

**Mr Marchese:** And it will be called again.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Wildman:** Wait a minute. I've got two minutes to respond. No, sir, you cannot do that. I want a ruling. It's beyond 12 of the clock.

**The Acting Speaker:** We'll finish the questions and comments. If you'd like to take your time, I'd like you to do it tonight. If not, you'll lose it.

**Mr Wildman:** Speaker, I did draw your attention to the clock. It is beyond 12 of the clock.

**The Acting Speaker:** Once we start the questions and comments, we'll finish them.

**Mr Wildman:** In that case, I defer to the member for Kingston and The Islands.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Kingston and The Islands has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I appreciate the confidence that all these members have in what was being said. What it basically boils down to is whether this government trusts municipalities. That's the bottom line. We know their actions have clearly indicated that's not the case. They don't trust municipalities. They set out formulas which are almost incomprehensible: Look at section 5. They tell municipalities the kind of items they cannot charge for when there's absolutely no reason they shouldn't be able to charge for them.

There's total inconsistency in saying development is hampered by the Development Charges Act when the statistics I gave you clearly indicate that the five municipalities with the largest development charges just happen to be the five areas that are growing the fastest in Ontario.

We know that AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, doesn't want this act. We know the clerks and treasurers don't want the act. We know that Crombie doesn't want any changes to the act. There's only one group that really wants the act, and that's the developers.

I think the Premier of this province should meet with the large urban mayor caucus of Ontario. It's my understanding that he's refused to do so. That doesn't sound to me like true partnership. If you are partners with somebody, surely you'd want to meet with your partners to discuss mutual areas of concern. He's refused to do so. Why does the Premier not want to meet with the large urban caucus of Ontario? Withdraw the bill, and then maybe municipalities can be equal partners with you.

**The Acting Speaker:** It being almost midnight, according to that fast clock up there, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 0007.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
208A	10848	1	32	mine, Wayne Locke, and one of the two boards in my



# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller  
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Kenora	McClash, Frank (L)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
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Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
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Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
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Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)		

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Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
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Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
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St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Vacant
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
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		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

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Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.



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of Ontario**

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**Assemblée législative  
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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 24 June 1997**

**Mardi 24 juin 1997**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 juin 1997

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### GIOVANNI CABOTO

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** It is with a great deal of pride that we reflect and remember that on June 24, 1497, an enterprising explorer in the employ of Henry II, King of England, is reported to have arrived off the coast of what we now call Canada. That explorer's name was Giovanni Caboto, a citizen of Venice. It is said that upon seeing the land and the plentiful fish in the water surrounding it, Caboto declared, "O bona vista," Italian for, "Oh, what a beautiful sight." It is said that the phrase gave rise to the town of Bonavista, Newfoundland. Today in Bonavista, as elsewhere in Canada, Italy and England, people are commemorating this extraordinary accomplishment of 500 years ago.

I think it is very refreshing to consider that Canada was discovered by neither the English nor the French, but by an Italian, whose ancestry is the foundation for both the English and French cultures and therefore Canada's.

It gives us an opportunity to reflect on the depth of the roots of Canadians of Italian origin in this country. These hardworking Canadians have helped to enrich our quality of life by building railways, roads, buildings and businesses, and especially by building bridges to all cultures and nationalities across Canada and contributing to the artistic and professional life of our province. Today is a day to reflect on their great accomplishments and contributions.

### SOCIAL SERVICES

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I rise to point out to the House that in the Social Assistance Reform Act, 1997, which has been tabled for debate in this House, section 37 says, "The minister shall by regulation designate geographic areas of Ontario for the purposes of this act." Then subsection 38(1), "The minister may by regulation designate a municipality or district social services administration board as a delivery agent for each geographic area to exercise the powers and duties of a delivery agent in that geographic area."

We all know the reason for this change is to enable the provincial government to download services and costs to the local municipalities and the local areas. What is interesting is that in northern Ontario there are very large expanses of territory where there are small communities

which are not organized municipally. Up till now the provincial government has provided social services directly in those areas.

The provincial government is now proposing to download these as part of the overall download. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is proposing permissive legislation some time this fall which would allow for area services boards.

How is it then that this act, which has already been tabled, indicates this will happen when the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines says it only will be permissive, and if the local communities do not want to have area services boards, they won't have to. One hand doesn't know what the other is doing.

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** In 1968 a Canadian writer by the name of Arthur Gibson wrote: "The most imperative need of our world is not for more and more speaking. It is for more, much more listening." This revelation holds true today and is exactly what this government is doing, listening to the people of Ontario.

When Soldiers' Memorial Hospital in Orillia discovered an oversight in their funding application, they asked for a review. The Ministry of Health completed the review and additional operating funding was forthcoming. This government is listening to the people.

When Simcoe East seniors called my office questioning the time frame on annual copayment, changes were made. The Ministry of Health and the minister responsible for seniors spread the copayment over a 16-month period. This government is listening to the people.

Community care providers have been asking for additional funding in Simcoe East to meet increasing demands. Last week the Minister of Health announced \$4.5 million in funding for community-based, long-term care in Simcoe county.

When Simcoe East residents found themselves in traffic jams at the Atherley Narrows bridge, they requested expansion of the bridge and roads. I arranged a meeting between the ministry, municipalities and Casino Rama. From this meeting casino engineers and the Minister of Transportation engineers found a solution. This government is listening to the people.

For years, Tom Gostick, Brian Dubeau, boat cruise operators on Lake Couchiching, Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay, have been writing me asking for highway signage. The Ministry of Transportation worked with the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism introducing a new tourist signage program.



## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Mike Harris has decided to stifle democracy with his draconian rule changes. I can tell you, Mr Speaker, people in Kent county know the value of maintaining democracy because their democratic rights have already been steamrolled by the Mike Harris bully bill.

My caucus colleagues and I sat through the night to oppose Bill 26, to shed light on its unprecedented attack on the citizens of Ontario. I held two public meetings on Bill 26, in Chatham and in Essex, to warn citizens in Essex and Kent counties of the extraordinary powers the government was taking for itself. My press release then said, "Municipalities are disturbed by the authority of the minister to force amalgamations, and gravely concerned that the criteria to support restructuring has not been established."

It was true then and it is true now. Time after time in this Legislature, at meetings and even personally to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, I have expressed my objection to the flawed process of amalgamation. The minister ripped our rural communities apart in a race to meet an artificial deadline.

The Chatham Daily News spoke for the community when it said, "The blame for Kent's failure to reach a local solution must rest on the shoulders of the provincial government." It went on to say, "What is more important, doing it fast or doing it right?"

Now a confident group of Kent county citizens have banded together to take the fight against Bill 26 to the courts. Look out, Mike Harris, the Kent County Citizens for Local Democracy are not giving up.

## GIOVANNI CABOTO

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Today, June 24, is an important day in our history. It is of course Jean Baptiste day and we join in noting that important day, but it also marks the 500th anniversary today of the arrival of one Giovanni Caboto to Canada.

On the shores of Newfoundland 500 years ago today, Giovanni Caboto arrived aboard an English sailing ship, and it's noteworthy that today Queen Elizabeth II is there to greet the occasion of the ship that was put together to recreate that sequence. I also want to note that the Italian Canadian community is justifiably proud of Giovanni Caboto's Italian roots and to note the presence in Canada for the next few days of the President of Italy, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, also here to partake of the celebrations. As a Canadian of Italian background I also personally take great pride in this event.

I also want to note that while these celebrations are going on, there are, as I know there are, concerns expressed by our first nations. I do not believe for one moment that either the celebrations of Giovanni Caboto's arrival in Canada or the legitimate injustices that our native peoples have need to be forgotten. Both need to be put forward and both need to be addressed and dealt with.

1340

## FÊTE DE LA SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

**M. Marcel Beaubien (Lambton) :** J'aimerais souhaiter à toute la communauté francophone une joyeuse Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Cette fête que nos ancêtres ont baptisée la fête des Canadiennes françaises et des Canadiens français est une tradition qui demeure chez tous les francophones d'Amérique du Nord un événement par lequel ils peuvent s'identifier.

L'Ontario compte une population importante de francophones. C'est grâce à cette capacité bilingue que plusieurs entrepreneurs voient l'Ontario comme un endroit idéal pour faire des affaires. C'est ça la valeur ajoutée de notre province.

Aussi, depuis l'an passé, ce gouvernement a fait un grand pas dans le dossier de la gestion scolaire. En effet, suite à la restructuration des conseils scolaires, nous avons annoncé la création de 12 conseils scolaires francophones. Il y a de quoi à fêter cette année. Il faut donc réfléchir aux opportunités que nous offrirons à nos jeunes. C'est pourquoi le gouvernement doit continuer son travail afin d'équilibrer le budget et de remettre dans les mains des contribuables l'argent que, ils et elles, gagnent.

Afin de marquer cette journée ici à la Législature ontarienne, j'aimerais souhaiter à tous les francophones de tous les coins de la province une bonne Saint-Jean-Baptiste.

**M. Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa-Est) :** Ces jours-ci, et particulièrement aujourd'hui, un peu partout en Ontario, les francophones fêtent des siècles de détermination tranquille à la survie et à la prospérité.

Je veux d'abord souhaiter une très heureuse Saint-Jean-Baptiste à tous les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, quelles que soient leurs origines, qui célèbrent leur appartenance à cette grande et diverse communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

La Saint-Jean a des racines historiques et très profondes. C'est un bon moment pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes à penser à Jeanne Lajoie, au père Thériault, à Alphonse Desjardins, au père Charlebois, à Gisèle Lalonde, au sénateur Jean-Robert Gauthier, à André Lalonde, à Omer Deslaurier et aux nombreux autres qui ont été pour nous des rassembleurs et qui nous montrent encore aujourd'hui que c'est l'organisation et la solidarité qui nous permettront un jour de parvenir au plein épanouissement.

Ce n'est pas vraiment un moment de parler de tout ce qui menace ma communauté : la privatisation, les transferts aux municipalités, les réductions budgétaires, et j'en passe. J'aimerais quand même que cette journée si importante soit l'occasion pour le gouvernement de réfléchir au sort qui est réservé à la population francophone.

J'aimerais aussi rappeler à M. Harris, à M. Wilson, à M. Villeneuve qu'ils annoncent aujourd'hui de ne pas fermer Montfort —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you. Member for Beaches-Woodbine.



## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** We've been raising concerns in this House about rule changes. On a number of occasions, members in the opposition have pointed out that when government moves too quickly, it's likely to make mistakes.

I want to use the example of the megacity bill, which was rammed through this Legislature. As a result of that, mistakes were made which trample on people's rights. Particularly I'm talking about the residents of East York and their access to effective local democracy.

This afternoon I will be introducing a private member's bill to amend the megacity act to increase the representation of councillors in East York from two to three. Currently, as that bill was pushed through by the government, we see that throughout all of Metro, most councillors represent on average 38,000 residents. In East York the number is 54,000. I have to say that a community council, which was supposed to be the answer to effective local democracy that the government put forward — a community council of two is a recipe for deadlock.

I hope to convince the government to support my private member's bill. I hope they'll use the occasion of introducing their son of megacity bill this week to address this very real problem. Some 81% of the people in East York said no to the megacity. Mike Harris didn't hear them, Al Leach didn't hear them, the two local Tory MPPs, who purport to represent them, didn't hear them at the time. You moved too quickly. I hope you'll listen to them now.

## GIOVANNI CABOTO

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** The arrival of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip for the anniversary celebrations of John Cabot's landing on the shores of Canada allow us to celebrate two important events.

First, we celebrate the introduction of the constitutional monarchy which has played a central role in shaping our country. We look forward to Her Majesty's return to Ontario and her visits to the communities of London, Stratford, North Bay and Ottawa.

Serving on behalf of Henry VII, John Cabot laid the foundations for future English and French settlements. As I stated in the House last year, having claimed this dominion for the crown, Giovanni laid the foundation for Canada's future development as a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy which would unite our bilingual, multicultural and regional traditions.

John Cabot, or Giovanni Caboto, as he was known in his native Italy, has come to symbolize more than simply the first formal steps in Canada's formation. This anniversary also allows us to recognize the important symbol Caboto has come to be for the Italian, if not wider, immigrant communities. It also provides us with an opportunity to pay tribute to the important role immigration has played in the development of Canada and Ontario.

Many of our colleagues here today and within the Italian community are the sons or daughters of immigrants. Many come to this province with one simple

hope: the hope of a country and province that could provide a better future for their families than the countries they left.

Today, Canadians of Italian descent hold key positions throughout our society. They are seated in the Supreme Court, they are members of Parliament and federal cabinet ministers, and they are my colleagues in this House, but most important, they are our neighbours and our friends.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

## SENIOR ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Seniors Issues]):** It's a pleasure to stand before you today during the final week of Seniors' Month, where we are celebrating voluntarism, to recognize the valued contributions seniors make to our society.

This evening at the Ontario Senior Achievement Awards we will recognize and honour 21 individuals who exemplify the generosity, goodwill and commitment seniors bring to communities all across Ontario.

Each of these individuals enrich the lives of many, with their abundant energy, their varied life and cultural experiences, and their wealth of talent and wisdom.

Some of the recipients have been involved in inter-generational programs with children, passing on their talent and wisdom to those who follow in their footsteps. Others have volunteered in hospitals, long-term-care facilities and many non-profit organizations, working selflessly to assist and improve the lives of others. Still others have fostered greater understanding of our cultural diversity, the arts and the importance of our history is to us all.

Though they've been witness to change, as perhaps no other generation before them, these seniors have been up to the challenge and have embraced the change. For example, one recipient's tireless work documenting the history of his own community is now posted on the Internet for everyone to access.

In their own way, each of these people have made contributions and sacrifices that are worthy of recognition, respect and our enduring thanks.

It is a pleasure to announce this year's recipients for Ontario: Dennis Alsop, Willis Blair, Ann Bourton, William Compel, Lois Carroll, Yiu Kuen Chan, Marion Edmondson, May Greig, Izetta Hobbs, Donald Johnson, Gordon McCutcheon, Pearl McPhee, Ena Mellor, Marshall Neilson, Wayne and June Pettie, Aline Plouffe, John Poste, Sidney Roberts, Armand Simard and Lou Wise.

In addition, I would like to congratulate the more than 180 municipalities across our province that have also recognized the achievements of seniors by naming a Senior of the Year.

Mr Speaker, I invite you and all my colleagues in this House to join the Honourable Hilary Weston, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, myself and the honorary chair of Ontario Seniors' Month, Gordie Tapp, to a ceremony this evening to recognize the recipients of this year's



Senior Achievement Awards. They are indeed an extraordinary group of mature Ontarians, and they are worthy of our enduring appreciation.

1350

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** I rise on behalf of the Ontario Liberal Party to add to the salute to seniors. I certainly agree that it is important that we recognize the unique contributions that have been made and congratulate the provincial government on having made those distinctions for people. Would that the provincial government provided as much distinction in its overall area of service to seniors.

Unfortunately, the minister, the sometime minister for seniors' affairs, we know — perhaps not at tonight's ceremony, but at other times — will be taken to account for a rejection of seniors on the part of this government since it has come into office. We certainly regret that this very much clouds any efforts on the part of this government towards seniors.

We saw this as recently as a week ago, when seniors, belatedly and after 71 days of being ignored by each member of the Conservative caucus, by the government in toto — by not being able to recognize that a mistake had been made with respect to their drug benefits and the amount of money they were made to pay. The \$100 deductible, twice in eight and a half months, was a shameless tax on seniors in this province. Even more shameless was the fact that it took 71 days for this province to recognize that, illustrating the character of this government when it comes to really appreciating the contribution seniors have made.

They not only inflicted a tax on them in their vulnerability, many of them having planned their retirement because we had drugs without those surcharges, without those taxes for 20 years in this province, but when they went ahead and did that they had the audacity to compound it by making that worse. It was only with the efforts of seniors that this government was brought to account and had to backtrack and give back four months' worth of benefits to seniors and prorate that cost. It was \$30 million a year that this government was extracting and taking away from seniors.

We know too that the people who live in the communities of Metro are going to be extremely upset knowing that the hospital closures continue apace. We know who is consuming the health services that have been cut \$435 million this year, \$365 million last year. That translates into longer waiting times in emergency rooms around the province; it translates into days and weeks, in some cases months, on waiting lists. That's where this government has parked seniors with serious health concerns: on waiting lists because of their reckless cutting of the hospital system.

We recognize too that some of those situations are ones none of us would want to see occur but which a government, borne by a certain level of recklessness, has allowed to happen: seniors strapped to their chairs in hospital wards where there isn't enough staff to attend to them, other seniors not attended to so that they've had conditions of extreme pain. These are avoidable conditions for seniors, ones we would hope there would be more tangible recognition of during Seniors' Month. This

month above all, if we're going to set aside a time to recognize the contributions of people who have made this province what it is, we would hope we would do something functional and very substantial for them. Instead, we have only the most superficial of recognitions coming forward from this government.

We see that again in the lack of long-term-care facilities. We have 16,000 people, mainly seniors, on the waiting list for long-term-care facilities in this province. Nothing has been done to change that. We've heard promises. We've seen no action. Unfortunately for this government, we know that this province's seniors, like many of the voters, are starting to appreciate the difference, in fact the vast gulf, that exists between the actions and the words of this government from time to time.

We know as well that there are seniors sitting in their abode today — let's call it what it is; it's their home — in their apartment, and with the rent decontrol this government wants to put in place, that apartment, that home, is at risk. Seniors who have lived in the same place, in the same home, for years and years now are subject, under the honourable minister's provisions in Bill 96, to losing that home if it gets converted into a condominium and there's substantial construction. They do not have adequate protection. This government had a choice; they could have provided that protection to seniors, but they chose not to.

Similarly, in the instance of AVA, in terms of the changes to actual value assessment this government has put in — MVA is really what it is — they had a choice to guarantee, to make a commitment with provincial dollars to make sure that seniors wouldn't be made to bear disproportionately the impact of that. Instead, they've washed their hands of it, they've put it in the hands of municipal governments, and they've told us much more clearly than any set of awards could tell us what they really care about seniors.

We are very glad today to extend the respect and salutations that this House should be conferring upon our seniors, but we cannot do that without drawing each member to account: What have the actual actions been on the part of this government towards seniors? Unfortunately, those actions have been sad. They have put seniors in a place where they don't deserve to be, which is denigrated, not supported and not given the fundamental respect they deserve by this government.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On behalf of my leader and party I'm very pleased to be able to extend our congratulations to the winners of the Ontario Senior Achievement Awards.

The minister for seniors quite clearly points out in his statement that the many achievements of seniors are only symbolically designated with these awards, and I think it's important for us to understand that. Indeed, seniors in our communities are more and more being relied upon by all of us to pick up a lot of the services, a lot of the continuity within our communities as a result of many of the cuts this government has made.

We see many seniors doing child care, helping their children and their children's children with child care in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



We see many seniors who are doing home care with partners who are ill, both men and women, who toil away in obscurity within their homes, trying to care for those for whom no care is available in the community, often exhausting themselves trying to find the services that have been there. They look with hope to some of the changes that are occurring in the health care system, hoping that the promise of community-based services will materialize, hoping that there will be respite care for themselves and for those who assist them.

It is true we have always, as communities, relied upon the wisdom and the experience of our elders to appreciate and have a perspective on the kinds of changes that are happening in our community, but one of the issues for us today is that we are not listening very well to some of the concerns of seniors. My colleague from York South pointed out that although seniors had identified a very serious problem many days, many weeks, many months before the government acted on the seniors' drug benefit plan, they were not heeded until it became very clear that their voices were being carried by members of the opposition parties in this place. It is extremely important for us all to learn from the example of our aboriginal neighbours that honouring our seniors means listening to them and listening to the experience they bring.

Most seniors do know that change occurs. The minister is quite right to point out that this generation of seniors has seen a greater range of change than any other generation in our entire history. But he is also aware that many of those seniors are fearful of simplistic change for change's sake, that they sound warnings about the speed with which change is occurring and the fact that we are not testing out the efficacy of these changes before we put them into place holus-bolus.

They know from their experience with the health care system, from their experience in terms of the tax system, from their experience both federally and provincially with the kind of security that they worked hard for many years, within their communities and with their various governments, to attain — they see that level of security being eroded by the actions of federal and provincial governments.

It would do us well to listen to the concerns they have. It would do us well to look at what has worked in their lives and to listen to their opinion about how we manage extraordinary change, how we manage extraordinary circumstances.

I'm sure the honourees tonight, people who are obviously very involved in their communities, very willing to volunteer their time and their experience, their expertise, would say to this government and to every other government in Canada that it is extraordinarily important for us all to learn from the past, to learn from those who have experienced change in the past, and to learn how to make change possible by moving slowly and testing, each step of the way, what really works.

The member for York South gave a long list of areas of disappointment for seniors in the policies of this government, and I won't repeat those. I will simply say that if we really honour them, we will —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much.

1400

# ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House I have today laid upon the table the annual report of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner for the period April 1, 1996, to March 31, 1997.

LARRY GROSSMAN

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** Mr Speaker, I am asking for unanimous consent to pay tribute to Larry Grossman.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Eves:** It is with both a great deal of pride and indeed much sadness that I rise today to pay tribute to my good friend and former colleague Larry Grossman. For 12 years, Larry was a respected and greatly admired member of this Legislature, for 25 years he was a devoted father, and for all 53 years of his life an individual who represented fairness, tolerance and integrity.

Larry Grossman's reputation as a talented individual with a driving ambition and a true sense of social justice was well-founded. Fortunately for Ontario, it was to public service that Larry directed a lot of his energies.

When I first arrived in this place in 1981, Larry was a great example for all of us newly elected members. He taught me that one individual member can indeed make a difference. He taught me to fight for what you believe in. He taught me to speak out, even when being silent would be politically expedient.

This attitude gained him the respect not only of his constituents and his colleagues on the government side of the House, but among opposition members as well. Stephen Lewis labelled Larry Grossman as a minister to watch. Former NDP MPP Richard Johnston said of Larry, "He is quite talented and organized, which differentiates him from most of his colleagues." I don't know what that said about the rest of us. His friend the honourable member for Renfrew North, who sits in this place today, in 1983 said the opposition considered him one of the toughest and most competent ministers in government.

From the time Larry Grossman entered political life in 1975, he was determined to make a difference, and indeed he did. He served in many capacities: as parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General; in 1977 he entered cabinet as Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations; he was appointed Minister of Industry and Tourism in 1978.

In that role, he was one of the first Canadian politicians to recognize the importance of high technology to our economy. The Toronto Star headline from 1978 cites "Whiz Kid Minister Out to Create Ontario Jobs." In hindsight, "whiz kid" was an understatement indeed. Today the benefits of his foresight are clear: Two out of every three jobs created in the province of Ontario in the last decade have been in the technology sector.

In 1982, citing his desire to get back to people's issues, Larry Grossman became Minister of Health. During his tenure there he introduced legislation requir-



ing, for the first time, immunization of all school children, and he established Ontario's first paramedic program.

He served in many subsequent cabinet posts, ranging from Minister of Education, Colleges and Universities, Provincial Secretary for Social Development, Treasurer and Minister of Economics, and government House leader.

Larry was a person who cared about people, individually and collectively. He was impatient. He was wanting to accomplish as much as possible in as short a period of time as possible. Larry was the epitome of a perfectionist.

I can remember one day when I was the House leader for the then third party, sitting in his office and him agonizing about the wording of a particular question he wanted to ask in question period. It was really quite insignificant, I thought. I asked him to come over to the window and look out on to University Avenue, where there was a dump truck going by. I said, "Larry, do you think the guy driving that truck really gives a damn about how you're going to word this question in question period today?" I think that helped him bring a sense of what he was all about back to him on that particular occasion, but it also demonstrated to me the perfection with which he strove to do his duties every single day in this place.

I can also recall in the 1987 election campaign, which was a more popular campaign for some of us than others, as I recall, hosting the then leader of the Conservative Party in my riding on Labour Day Monday. He asked me to come on to the bus with him for a few minutes before he went into the luncheon we had planned. He said: "Well, I have good news and bad news for you. The pundits are writing us off; we're not going to win enough seats to maintain our status as a political party. The good news is that we could win as many as 16 seats. The bad news is that we could win as few as two, and you're one of the two."

Larry Grossman gave 110% all the time. As he said, "I don't want to look back on a political career saying, 'If only I'd pushed a little harder on this thing.' I've pushed as hard as I can on as many fronts as possible."

Outside and after politics, Larry had several favourite pastimes. Baseball: He considered himself to be an expert on baseball and offered opinions even when they weren't asked for. He was a great music enthusiast. He was an avid reader and a bit of a romantic, *The Thorn Birds* being his favourite book.

I think one thing that most clearly taught me something about Larry Grossman's character and personality outside of this place was his love of family, following in his father, Allan's, footsteps, displaying love and respect for his mother on many occasions, his children Melissa, Jamie and Robbie. If you had the opportunity to hear his children speak at his service yesterday, you would understand exactly how much his family meant to him and how much he meant to his family.

Larry once told me, when talking about his children: "Remember to make time for them. Seize the time you have at hand, because the opportunity may not be there in the future." His advice was certainly right for me, and

having heard his children speak yesterday I know it was right for them as well.

His numerous postings on boards and service organizations are almost too many to mention. Two weeks ago today, Larry Grossman was named to the Order of Ontario. When reflecting on the criterion for that award that the honoree has enriched the lives of others through excellence in his or her respective field, I cannot think of a more deserving recipient.

Larry Grossman's loss will be felt in many ways: His family has lost a source of strength; our party has lost one of its key advisers; the Toronto Blue Jays have lost one of their biggest fans; Ontario has lost one of its most dedicated citizens; thousands of people throughout the province, including many of us in this House, have lost a very good friend.

On behalf of the government, I extend our most sincere condolences to the Grossman family, to his children, Melissa, Jamie and Robbie. To the members of this House, I would ask that we not forget Larry Grossman's many contributions and achievements and that we all strive to live by the same values of family, community service, principles that guided Mr Grossman in everything he did. In so doing, we will ensure that his legacy lives on in this House and indeed in Ontario.

1410

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I too join in paying tribute to Larry Grossman, a formidable adversary. Those of us who sat in the House when he was here certainly knew what that meant. Larry was the consummate politician and he came by it quite honestly, and I think you can't mention Larry Grossman without mentioning Allan Grossman.

Allan, his dad, was well-known to the community. I knew his father before Larry was born. He was our local alderman. He had relatives living right next door to us and would come often to visit. He then entered politics in 1955 and served in St Andrews-St Patrick for 20 years, and when he retired his son, Larry, took his place. So between the two Grossmans they held that seat consecutively for 32 years. I can tell you that his dad often said to me that his greatest achievement was his son, Larry, because Larry had fulfilled all his dreams and all his ambitions. Allan had lived to see Larry do all the things we just heard about. Just as yesterday we were at the funeral and two of the three children gave part of the eulogy, I was at Allan's funeral in 1991 and Larry gave the eulogy. But he was talking about a man whose life had been lived. He had seen his son reach the highest pinnacles of political life and seen his grandchildren, and it was natural, it was very natural that this is the cycle of life and someone passes on and someone picks up the torch.

Yesterday unfortunately we saw something that was relatively unnatural. We saw two young children speaking about their love for their dad and about the various values that had been imparted to them by Larry, and I can talk about Larry's drive. He was absolutely driven in everything he did and he was a tough, tough person, yet when you met him socially, when we used to get together and we used to talk, he was a totally different person. But it did not in any way detract from his particular feeling that



if it was worth doing, you did it right and you did it with all your might. He gave and he took as good as he got.

When we talk about his accomplishments, I'm reminded of something that has really stuck in my memory since it happened, and that was his love for sports. When I was the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations — and just by coincidence his first posting was as Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations — we were invited to a Heart and Stroke Foundation event. I remember Larry represented the Progressive Conservative Party, I represented the government, the member for Lake Nipigon, if he can remember, represented the NDP, and we went to a function at the Eaton Centre.

There were three Blue Jays baseball players there: Lloyd Moseby, George Bell and one other whom I can't remember. The idea behind the organizers was that we were going to have a question period; the idea was to really show up the politicians, so they would ask questions. They asked questions about the Blue Jays. They'd say, "How many bases are there in baseball?" They would say, "Three." Then they would turn to the politicians and they would say, "Who played in the 1923 World Series?" We would huddle and Larry said, "These are the teams," and we would get up and he would give the answer.

This went on. Each question got more and more difficult. Finally the last question, at which I just threw up my arms: They said to our team, "How many stitches are there in a baseball?" I said, "Give me a break." Larry said, "Are you talking single stitches or double stitches?" When he was told double stitches, he gave them the answer. I got back into the House the next day and I sent him a note and I said, "Larry, you've just done it for me; I cannot believe that you would know that."

That is the kind of person Larry was. He was absolutely driven at everything that he did, whether it was his children, whether it was his politics, whether it was his sports or whether it was his music. That is really the memory I think we shall all have of him.

His life of course was far too short. Those of us who were at the awards ceremony for the Order of Ontario couldn't help but feel the grief of his two children, Robbie and Melissa, as they accepted the order on behalf of their father. The grief was palpable. You knew it was just a matter of time; here it is, and that was two weeks ago today.

If we had to talk about Larry Grossman and if you had to think of an epitaph for his tombstone, I think one he would appreciate and would really agree with is that he was a gamer. I would ask that we do as we do in the Jewish faith: remember his memory as a blessing.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I wish to join my colleagues from Parry Sound and Wilson Heights in the tribute to Larry Grossman. I too was at the service yesterday afternoon and I don't think I've ever been at one that was more moving and yet carried off in a way that had such resolve on the part of his children. I was taken aback by how much they obviously loved him but were able to express it at a funeral service in a way that was so filled with resolve and determination to get through it in a very firm way without breaking down.

That was very impressive and I thought it spoke partly to some of the characteristics that were in Larry himself.

I personally served with Larry for the full 12 years he was here. Twelve years, to me, doesn't seem like a long time in this place, but I can tell you he sure cut a wide swath in those 12 years in this place, from somewhat of a rebel backbencher to party leader, and with cabinet posts in between. He really did make his mark in this place.

As an opposition member, I was of course very well aware of his talents. He was very obviously smart, he was aggressive, he was hardworking, well-informed, articulate. Others have used these adjectives as well. What better characteristics for a young man on the move than those. He was a young man on the move, and he was a young man in a hurry as well, and he could not have achieved what he did if it was simply ambition not backed up by a lot of talent and a lot of resolve.

I can recall one day I asked a question of a fellow cabinet minister of his — I was in opposition then of course — on a rather broad policy question. I could have asked the same question of Larry Grossman but I asked another cabinet minister, and I thought I did quite well in putting down that particular cabinet minister and scoring a few political points. I no sooner sat down than across the floor came a note from Larry Grossman in which he said to me, "Floyd, tomorrow ask me that question and I'll blow you out of the water." I knew that he could and I knew that he would, and so I didn't ask him that question. I have to tell you that he made opposition critics better because you had to be extremely well prepared if you were going to go up against him either in a committee or here on the floor of the Legislature.

I respected him because of his abilities. I can recall when he was a minister he was very creative in the way he approached his ministry too. I remember he was Minister of Industry and Tourism, I think it was called then, and he did two things that have stuck in my mind to this day. This was prior to the days of free trade, when you could do some things you cannot do now. One of them was something he called "global product mandating," in which he wanted Ontario companies to establish a global mandate and the government would back them up in the way in which they would carry that out. I thought it was a good idea and I still think it's a good idea.

But he also had a program that he called "import replacement," which is much harder to do today than it was back in those days. Larry Grossman got a large number of products which are imported into this country, which should not have been imported in his view, and in my view as well, assembled them all together and said to the people who used those products, "These are all imported; now let's get together and see if we can get somebody in this province to manufacture these products," because there was a large market for them. I thought that was a good idea. He was very creative in that sense and not unwilling to take risks as well.

After he left politics, involuntarily, we did stay in touch a bit, not as much as I'm sure some of the members did. But I have had supper with him on occasion and he was a truly wonderful dinner companion. He could be



incredibly caustic and mocking and funny, and at times aggressive as well, but always a very entertaining dinner companion, very well informed and completely committed to the role of public life in this province. I always looked forward, when an opportunity came up, to have dinner with him.

I am sorry he is gone because I think he still had a lot to offer this province. On behalf of my caucus, I wish to extend condolences to his family and to his legion of friends, because believe me, he had an enormous number of them, and I know that I always wanted to be considered one of them.

**The Speaker:** I'll take the comments from the Minister of Finance, the member for Wilson Heights and the member for Nickel Belt and ensure they get passed on to the family.

1420

### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** In the west gallery today, we have Mr James Taylor, the previous member for Prince Edward-Lennox. Welcome, sir.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm going to ask for your help. It concerns standing order 54 and the events which transpired last night. It occurred to us last night that the representative of the government House leader had no idea how to call government business forward for debate or what government business to call. As a result, there was a great deal of scrambling about here last night. Speaker, could you ensure that the government always has somebody on duty who understands the rules of the House so this doesn't happen again?

**The Speaker:** It's not a point of order.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### TRANSFER OF PROVINCIAL HIGHWAYS

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** My question today is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, in recent weeks you and your government have transferred 24% of the provincial highway system to local governments. In eastern Ontario, you have transferred in recent weeks 50% of the provincial highways to local governments. My question is, having transferred in my region, in eastern Ontario, 50% of the provincial highways, representing 2,154 kilometres, are you prepared as a government to transfer a corresponding amount of the \$2.5 billion that your government will collect this year in gasoline and fuel taxes to local governments in eastern Ontario that are now or very soon going to have to accept fully 50% of previously provincial highways in eastern Ontario?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I want to thank the honourable member for the question. I think it's a very good question. It touches on an issue, actually, that the provincial government has been lobbying the federal government to see if they can in fact share those same dollars that the honourable member is refer-

ring to. Having said that, I haven't been very successful, so certainly I would like to ask the member's help in making that a reality. I just want to make it very clear that the provincial government of Ontario wants to utilize the limited dollars that it does have in making sure that true provincial highway infrastructure is protected.

But as far as what we have done with the municipalities is concerned, I believe we have transferred the roads in good condition; and the ones that were not, we were able to make sure that we are going to be investing those dollars in bringing them up to that level that they should be. I want to say to the member we will do what needs to get done.

**Mr Conway:** Let me get more specific, Minister. Let me talk about the Toronto-Ottawa highway that most people use, the highway that takes people from Toronto down the 401, up Highway 37 through Tweed and east along Highway 7 into the national capital, well known to hundreds of thousands of motorists in Ontario. Under your new plan, you're going to keep 401 and you're going to keep Highway 7. But you're going to turn that 42-kilometre section of the Ottawa-Toronto highway that runs through the village of Tweed in the county of Hastings over to local government. My question is, why should local people in Hastings county pay for that portion of the provincial traffic that has gone, is going and will surely continue to travel across that part of the provincial highway system that was, is and will continue to be the Highway 37 corridor?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** Highway transfers are going to benefit municipalities. They're going to be able to control the land zone use and also control entrances and building. Local development can actually be expedited in those corridors. We are investing \$127 million to make sure that Ottawa will now, in that particular region, have access to the 401. With the completion of the 416, I believe a lot of the traffic the member is referring to at this particular point in time will be taken over by Highway 416.

**Mr Conway:** Another breathtaking part of your new plan is that you and your colleagues in the Harris government are going to turn over 200 kilometres of the historic King's Highway 41, which runs from Lake Ontario at Napanee to the Quebec border at Pembroke, most of that major artery that's been a provincial highway for decades, all of which you're going to turn over to the counties. Most of that highway runs through provincial crown land that is obviously not very heavily populated. Why should local taxpayers in Lennox and Addington, Frontenac and Renfrew counties pay for a highway the bulk of which travels through a provincially owned woodlot from Napanee to Pembroke?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I have said to the honourable member that local municipalities have been asking MTO for many years; they want more to say about those local roads and highways because of potential possible growth.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Minister.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** As I was saying, municipalities have been asking for many years for decreasing intervention on the part of the provincial government. That is exactly what we're doing. We are addressing the prob-



lems in the best way and we are doing the transfers in an orderly fashion. We've also put aside \$225 million, which will be replenished on a yearly basis, that will help those counties, those municipalities in case the help is needed. We are going to do what we said we were going to do: make sure the transition is going to be done in a fair, proper way.

### RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. I'd like to ask you about the threat your government has been making to small and rural hospitals. Your district health council reports come in with the assistance of your ministry, and then incredibly in Lambton county, two days before the final report, after a draft report had recommended the closure of Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital, you held it up. You stopped what was up until then an attack on small hospitals. Two days before, suddenly you saw the light and said that something had gone wrong.

We understand you're about to announce a small rural hospital policy. It was three months ago you said you would have it very shortly. When you put that policy forward, we want to know, to understand what's going to happen after the House has risen. We want some accountability today. Will you take into account the social and economic impact hospitals have in these small and rural communities? Will you be listening to the economic and social impact arguments that have been made by the mayors and the reeves of all persuasions, and thousands of people who have turned out to events in those communities? Minister, will you tell us that will be in the policy?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** While I appreciate the question, the honourable member's position on the rural health care policy has been rather confusing for me, his colleagues, colleagues in the NDP and our party who sit on the estimates committee, because we've been going through hours of questions and answers in that committee, and anyone watching that over the past couple of weeks would know that the honourable member has been all over the board. He knows very well, because I've explained ad nauseam, what the elements of that policy will be: to recognize the driving distances in rural Ontario, the weather conditions and all the unique needs of rural Ontario and northern Ontario that need to be taken into account. So I'd ask the honourable member if he's in favour of a rural northern Ontario hospital policy. 1430

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I just want to take this time to introduce a gentleman in the west gallery who I think had one of the most difficult jobs in this place, the ex-Speaker Mr David Warner. Welcome.

Supplementary, the member for York South.

**Mr Kennedy:** Thank you, Mr Speaker and Mr Ex-Speaker.

Minister, I appreciate that you seem to be, as in other areas, conceding your ministry. We'll be happy to take it over should you wish to do that.

What we want to know from you and what the people of Wiarton, Port Colborne, Fort Erie and a whole bunch

of communities want to know from you is, are you going to let them have a real emergency service? Will those who have a surgery be able to keep it? Will they be able to have a real emergency service? Will they be able to have a real hospital? Will that be part of your policy, or is this just some political Band-Aid you've put together to paper over the attacks you've made on health care all around this province? Minister, will you specifically and explicitly tell us that the hospitals that have emergency services today will be able to keep them at the very same level they had last year? Will you let them do that?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The policy will make it clear that no one is exempt from restructuring in terms of getting rid of the waste and duplication and excessive administration in the system.

Having said that, I want the honourable member to be very clear, because I've made this clear to him many, many times, that politicians didn't write the rural policy. It was people like Robert Muir of the Ontario Hospital Association; Dr Ray Dawes, president of the Rural Physicians Group of the Ontario Medical Association; Dr Michael Murray, emergency physician service representative from Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie; Dr Jim Rourke, a family physician from Goderich; Dr Dennis Psutka, an emergency physician at McMaster University Medical Centre; Willis Rudy, former executive director of Wilson Memorial General Hospital in Marathon; Charlotte Clay-Ireland, past chairman of ROMA, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association; representatives from the north and throughout, all experts, including nurses from rural Ontario, who wrote the policy in response to the commission and the government saying that there's a very real need for a specific rural and northern hospital policy in this province. It will be the first of its kind and everyone in rural Ontario —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister of Health. Final supplementary.

**Mr Kennedy:** You can recognize why I would be disappointed with that answer: It wasn't an answer. You didn't tell us: Will they have the same emergency services they have today? Will you recognize their economic and social impacts? You won't tell us, Minister. Instead, as usual, you're fobbing it off to someone else. That's not acceptable. These hospitals have already scrimped and saved. They have doctors who are leaving them because of the uncertainty, because of the threat you have them under — you exclusively.

Stand here today and tell us that your policy — which has taken away \$490,000 from Wiarton, a 10% cut; \$589,000 from Port Colborne, another 10% cut; \$633,000 from Fort Erie, an 8% cut; and \$966,000 from Grimsby — will include a means of reinvestment to recognize the good, hard work that they've done to make these hospitals viable, that this is not just going to be rhetoric, that it's not just going to be a political Band-Aid, that you are really going to help these hospitals stay viable and stay open. Minister, tell us today.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Other members of the policy team were Louise LeBlanc, president of the Emergency Nurses Association of Ontario —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.



**Hon Mr Wilson:** I mentioned the names of the honourable people who came forward as volunteers to help write the policy to ensure the honourable member knows that the policy is written by rural people, by experts in rural medicine and rural nursing care.

I don't need any lectures and this government doesn't need any lectures from you, Mr Kennedy, or from the NDP. Some 70 emergency rooms were either closed or closing in rural Ontario when we came to office. We brought in, after the Scott report, the \$70-an-hour sessional fee for physicians, and 70 emergency rooms in rural and northern Ontario are open today thanks to this government's action. I don't need any lectures from the opposition. Our record is second to none with respect to emergency services in rural Ontario.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the Minister of Environment. The Minister of Environment is supposed to be here.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Lost in the smog.

**Mr Hampton:** Yes, he must be lost in the smog.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Here he is.

**Mr Hampton:** Today at the United Nations, Canada is coming under attack for failing to meet its commitments made at the Rio environmental summit to clean up our environment. Your government, the Ontario government, bears much of the responsibility for this failure. For example, today we have the first smog alert of the season, stretching from Windsor right into central Ontario. Today and tomorrow we can expect our hospitals to admit people choking and gasping for breath as a result of the smog.

We're still waiting for your government to act on its promise to bring in mandatory testing of automobile exhaust pollution. Can you tell us how much longer the people of Ontario will have to wait for that program?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** First of all, today the air in Toronto is actually quite good. At 1:30 today the air quality index was 22, which is in the range of good air. In fact there won't be a smog problem today. However, it's not uncommon during this time of year, as has been in the past history of our province over the last five or 10 years, that there have been smog alerts during this summer period.

That is why this government is taking action where previous governments didn't take action on air quality. That is why we have lowered the gas volatility for gasolines during the summer period in Ontario, something previous governments didn't do. That is why this government has taken the unprecedented steps of revising some 75 air quality standards, which previous governments neglected to do. We are taking positive action and we will continue to take positive action to address air quality problems in Ontario. We are the first government to recognize this. We are the first government to deal with this.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, I was a member of a government that brought in a very successful pilot project to deal with automobile exhaust pollution, and other juris-

dictions have acted in a similar way. You have these things to build on. In fact, you haven't built on them at all.

You know, and everyone else in the province who pays attention to this issue will know, that 2,000 people die each year in Ontario because of poor air quality. Cars and trucks are the single largest cause of smog, but with a proper testing program we could make a real difference with respect to that kind of air pollution.

I ask you again. You could save lives if you would quit stalling. When will the people of Ontario see the mandatory testing of automobile exhaust pollution that you promised?

1440

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We are using the results of the pilot project to design an effective program to deal with smog and air quality in the province. We have been looking at the experience of other jurisdictions, 32 jurisdictions in the United States plus the province of British Columbia, because we are trying to learn from their mistakes — and mistakes they have made; in fact, in each jurisdiction they are going through the second and third stages of developing their particular programs.

It is our intent to go down this road. We are going down this road cautiously because we want to get it right the first time around and not cause the taxpayers undue expense and hardship in addressing this problem.

**Mr Hampton:** The reality is that other provinces have passed Ontario. Yes, other provinces may have made some mistakes; they learned from their mistakes and they have moved on. You have done literally nothing. Let me quote John Wellner of the Toronto Environmental Alliance. He says, "Quite literally, people will be dropping dead if something isn't done by the province."

As I said, other provinces are surpassing you. Other provinces have made great headway, especially British Columbia, over the last two years. How many more people in Ontario have to die before you do something?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We are making progress. Mayor Michael Hurst of Windsor: "We in Windsor strongly support your position in this matter." My position has been not only to address it domestically but to address it in terms of the transborder pollution problems we have.

We will address this matter in a reasonable, logical, competent manner to reduce emissions in this province, and this will happen within a period of time which will make the program work and so that the people of Ontario will participate in it in a willing manner.

I thank the NDP and the Liberal Party for their support in this matter and expect that any legislation I would bring forward would have their complete support.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. News reports say you are about to introduce your long-awaited son of megacity legislation. The people of Metro Toronto are bracing themselves for what could be another big attack on democracy.

We know you need this bill to correct the mistakes you made with Bill 103. You tried to ram Bill 103 through



this House thoughtlessly and recklessly, and as a result you don't have any regulatory power. If you're going to control the transition process towards the so-called megacity, you need that regulatory power.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Hampton:** The question is this: We want you to hold full public hearings on your son of megacity legislation. We want you to hold those hearings so there will be public input and you won't make the same sorts of incompetent bumbling mistakes with this one that you made with —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** If the member of the third party wants to talk about stumbling, bumbling mistakes, it's the one he just made. The bill that's going to be introduced has nothing to do with regulatory power that we eliminated from Bill 103.

This is a bill that we stated at the outset would be introduced. When I introduced Bill 103, we stated categorically at that time that it was a foundation bill and that we would be introducing a second bill to deal with the administrative aspects of going to a single city.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** The reality is that you rammed your megacity bill through so quickly that you've left behind local democracy. One way that you can fix, at least in part, that mess you've left is to give community councils meaningful power over the guts of the planning process. That means zoning and official plan amendments. That's the only way in which local people will have control over local decisions affecting their particular neighbourhoods. If the megacity council, on the other hand, controls zoning and official plan amendments, it means that you'll have a vast bureaucracy that controls what will happen in every local neighbourhood, and local control will quite frankly just be a sham.

Minister, I just want to ask you, will you use your son of megacity legislation to give community councils control over zoning and official plan amendments?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again to the member of the third party, what we want to do is a very democratic thing and give the new council, the newly elected council of the unified city, the power and the ability to make those decisions. They are going to be the duly-elected members. They should decide what responsibilities are provided to the community councils. That's their job, that's what they're elected to do, and that's what they will do.

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** The problem, Minister, is that your megacity bill does not allow the new megacity council to delegate those authorities. You've centred those authorities within the megacity council.

You made other mistakes. We know your coming bill is going to amend your megacity legislation with respect to the Cafon Court area and the regulatory powers, but there are other problems. The people in East York, for example, are desperate for you to amend to ensure that they get adequate representation. Right now, you've only given them two councillors, which means they will be underrepresented on a proportionate basis to every other

resident in the cities of what is now Metropolitan Toronto. They also know that their community council will be totally ineffective because there will only be two members there. It's a recipe for deadlock.

Today I'm introducing a private member's bill. I'm going to ask you to support that concept to increase the representation for the residents of East York to three councillors. I'm going to ask you, please, to help us expedite that so it can be in place for a fall election, by inserting that provision in your bill that you'll introduce this week. Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I find it absolutely incredible. On one hand they stand there and talk about this government ramming things down people's throats, and then when we stand up and say that we're going to give the new council the authority and the power to establish community councils in any form that it chooses — once that council is elected it can change the community councils to any form that it chooses — they start talking about, "The government should act, the government should do this."

We're going to give the elected council of the new unified city the power to make the decisions on what the community councils should do, what they'll be responsible for, what the size of them are, what geographic areas they should represent. The new council of the new city of Toronto will have the authority and the power to do that, as it should, not have it forced on them by a provincial government, like they're asking us to do.

1450

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** My question is for the Chair of Management Board. I have in my hands a copy of the agreement which you signed —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. The member for Windsor-Sandwich.

**Mrs Pupatello:** Thank you. Actually, this is a very significant issue for a number of public servants in Ontario. My question is for the Chair of Management Board. I have a copy, signed by Mike Harris, of the OPSEU agreement that was the result of days and days of walking the picket lines by public servants around the precinct here and right across Ontario, for weeks in the dead of winter. The end of that was Mike Harris signing this agreement with public servants in Ontario.

What this did was provide some kind of dignity for people who have worked for years for the Ontario government. After you signed this agreement, Minister, you said it was a very good agreement and you were pleased. Could you please explain to this House why you are now in breach of this contract, what possible rationale you could have to breach the very contract that Mike Harris signed?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I had a little hand in that contract myself, being involved with the negotiations through a long period of time, and I would say that the government does live up to the agreement, to the contract. I suspect that the member for Windsor-Sandwich is indicating that from time to time there are grievances associated with any contract associ-



ated with the government. That was true under the Liberal government; that was true under the NDP government; it's certainly true under this government.

There is a process in place. If there are differences of opinion, there's a process in place which can involve arbitration. The differences are resolved and the parties settle and move on.

**Mrs Papatello:** Honestly, I don't think anyone would believe that this is like any other government Ontario has had. This government has moved forward with privatization plans. That means negotiation with your public servants is more critical than it has ever been in the area of privatization and what guarantees and frankly dignity you are giving to your own employees.

May I say again: Mike Harris signed the agreement. The grievance board has now found you in breach of that same agreement that you negotiated. You were in breach in the very area of having absolutely no concern for your own employees, for running completely rough-shod over them, throwing them out the door without so much as a thought as to where they might be.

I have a résumé here. Here's an example: A Ministry of Transportation employee for over 20 years who worked as a patrol foreman; duties included responsibility for maintenance of all highway operations. What can I tell these people, of whom this is just one example? They cannot even count on their own government to stand up to the contract that they negotiated.

**Hon David Johnson:** The member for Windsor-Sandwich could tell all of the employees, and I'll tell all of the employees today, that this government values the contributions of the employees. This government values the employees. We signed a contract which provided for reasonable efforts that the employees would move with the job, in case the job was outsourced or privatized or if the job went to another corporation, for example a municipal corporation.

We have introduced human resource factors to go along with the contract that we signed. Now there's a difference of opinion in terms of the human resource factors. The Grievance Settlement Board is the natural place for it to be discussed. It has been discussed there. There has been a ruling. The government will certainly comply with the ruling. The government will be meeting with the union next week to discuss this matter further.

This is a normal type of situation. It happened with the Liberal government; it happened with an NDP government. I can assure you that we value the employees and are following through on this.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I would like to follow up on the question from the member for Windsor-Sandwich, but I'd like to ask it — I don't like the answer I heard from the Chair of Management Board — of the minister for privatization for the government.

You, Minister, have had now to put your privatization plans on hold because you've been caught. You've been caught in breach of an agreement that your government had signed with OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. Why did you, as the privatization minister, and your colleagues agree to make reasonable efforts to let people keep their jobs when you privatize

them, keep their jobs with the new employer and then turn around and completely ignore that obligation?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** I will refer that question to the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon David Johnson:** This is an issue that rightly falls under Management Board because it's not just privatization. There are a number of other factors: outsourcing, contracting out, many different ways of divesting of services from the provincial government to another entity.

I don't know why the words "social contract" pop into my mind whenever the NDP complains about how employees are being treated. We value our employees. We negotiated a contract with our employees, which is more —

*Interjections.*

**Hon David Johnson:** I notice Sid Ryan in 1993 said, "This no doubt will go down in the annals of history as being the greatest betrayal of workers in this province by any government of any stripe." That's what Sid Ryan had to say about the social contract.

There were grievances under an NDP government. There were grievances under a Liberal government. There are certainly grievances that we have to deal with. We are listening to the arbitrator's conclusion as a result of the Grievance Settlement Board hearing. We are discussing this matter with OPSEU, and we'll be taking actions in conjunction with OPSEU in the future to obey the arbitrator's ruling.

**Mr Laughren:** You try and give a junior minister a profile and they don't know when you're doing them a favour.

The Chair of Management Board can spin this all he likes. Two things are important here: One is we are talking about privatization. I'm not talking for the moment about contracting out or outsourcing. I'm talking about privatization, which is why I asked Mr Sampson the question, and he chose to flip it back to you.

Secondly, the grievance board has ruled against you. It's a decision. It's not something for you to consider now. The decision's been made. I'm asking you and we've asked you, and members from the official opposition have asked you as well, will you at least, at a very minimum, guarantee the jobs of the most vulnerable people in your employ, namely those with disabilities? Will you at least guarantee those people a job if there's any privatization that occurs in the services they presently provide?

**Hon David Johnson:** As we did through the contract, we are committed to taking those reasonable efforts, dealing with all employees of the province of Ontario, that all employees would be able to go with the new service delivery, whether it's privatization, whether it's outsourcing or whether it involves some municipal entity, for example. Whatever form the alternative service delivery takes, we are going to live up to the terms of the contract.

There's been a difference of opinion in terms of how exactly that should be done. The Grievance Settlement Board has made a ruling. We have already begun discussions with OPSEU. Those discussions will be more intense next week and we will resolve this matter to the satisfaction of both parties.



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## ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Ed Doyle (Wentworth-Est) :** My question today is for the minister of francophone affairs. Ma question aujourd'hui est pour le ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones.

Aujourd'hui, c'est la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, fête des francophones. It's the francophone Saint-Jean-Baptiste holiday. Pourriez-vous nous dire ce que votre gouvernement a apporté de nouveau pour le bien des francophones en Ontario ?

**L'hon Noble A. Villeneuve (ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones) :** Je remercie mon collègue de Wentworth-Est de m'avoir donné l'occasion, premièrement, de souhaiter une bonne Saint-Jean-Baptiste à tous nos francophones ici en Ontario.

Je suis fier du nombre important de réalisations dans le domaine des affaires francophones, des prestations aux services en français. Tout en particulier je veux noter le maintien des programmes en français au Collège francophone de technologie agricole et alimentaire d'Alfred, un partenariat avec l'Université de Guelph ; la désignation de 48 agences additionnelles en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français pour offrir leurs services en français — ceci est le plus grand nombre d'agences à être désignées dans une année ; l'établissement de 12 conseils scolaires francophones avec leur propre gestion ; le soutien de nos collègues à distance francophones. Finalement, je suis très fier de nos accomplissements envers la francophonie ontarienne.

**M. Doyle :** Monsieur le Ministre, pourriez-vous nous dire ce que le gouvernement fait pour encourager la participation et l'unique contribution des jeunes francophones au développement économique de la province ?

**L'hon M. Villeneuve :** Nos jeunes francophones ontariens ont des atouts spéciaux, étant donné que la vaste majorité sont bel et bien bilingues et que nous avons plus de diplômés francophones en Ontario depuis longtemps. Puis, dans le contexte, leur capacité bilingue leur donne l'habileté, une valeur ajoutée considérable. Nous avons ciblé un programme communautaire pour le développement économique de nos jeunes et pour leur donner un avantage réel de valeur ajoutée du fait qu'ils sont bilingues.

## EDUCATION REFORM

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William) :** My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. You acknowledged on Focus Ontario on Saturday night that, "The very early years, the time from four to eight, is a critical time in the learning process of a child."

We agree. That's why we have been so distressed by your abandonment of any responsibility for keeping junior kindergarten programs in this province. You can use all the empty words you like about focusing your attention on the early years, but the fact is that you cut the funding for junior kindergarten. First you made the program optional; then you cut the funding. More and more boards are going to be forced to cut junior kinder-

garten because it is the only option you've left them to deal with the funding cuts.

If you believe that the years of four to eight are critical years for learning, will you restore full funding for junior kindergarten?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training) :** I believe the member opposite knows that we haven't removed the funding for junior kindergarten. We removed the program that was mandatory across the province. We continue to fund it, as we do every other program in education.

The question is, will this government leave in place the general legislative grant program that your government left in place, a program that treats students in Ontario as second-class students by virtue of the funding available to them? No, we won't. We will replace that with an allocation model that meets the individual needs of every student in Ontario. Finally and at long last and in answer to the 24 reports that have been done on education in my lifetime, yes, this government will change the funding formula to one that is fair to every student in Ontario.

**Mrs McLeod :** This minister gives lip-service to the importance of the early years, but the bottom line is that he has cut the funding for junior kindergarten and he has abandoned any responsibility for early education.

He has abandoned his responsibility for children with special needs too. He gives lip-service to adapting his rigorous curriculum and then he suggests, as he did on Saturday night, that students with special needs will need to go to summer school or work a bit extra after school so that they can, and I quote, "get up to speed."

Minister, you really don't get it. You really don't understand that meeting the needs of children who have special needs means giving their school more resources. It doesn't mean making the kids work harder.

Will you keep the faith in what you say you believe in, in making every student a first-class student and giving them a first-class opportunity? Will you keep that faith by putting back the \$533 million you stole from education so that junior kindergarten programs and special education programs can be put back?

**Hon Mr Snobelen :** I can assure the member opposite that our government will continue to do what it has been doing, which is directing our funding into the classroom, where it makes a difference with students, and by being very clear on the standards we expect students in this province to reach so we can attain our goal of having the highest student achievement in Canada at long last for our students here in Ontario. It's hard work, but it needs to be done, in sharp contrast to what your government did and what the previous government did.

Let me draw your attention to a column by Thomas Walkom. It says, "Reading Between the Lines of Ministry Bafflegab." It says:

"Probably the funniest newspaper story published in a while comes from the Ottawa Citizen. The story is by a reporter, Elizabeth Payne, and describes how the Ontario cabinet, baffled by a policy document on education that no minister could understand, had to turn to an outside consultant named Prose Busters. For a fee of \$10,500, the consultant translated the education ministry's Common Curriculum, Grades 1-9, from jargon into English."



The last paragraph reads: "Parents might be troubled by this document. The education minister is not. After all, as the Common Curriculum notes, the events, problems and situations one encounters in daily life —"

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you, Minister.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEALS TRIBUNAL

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. You will know that the standing committee on government agencies is looking very closely at the appointments you're making to the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal.

I have the criteria that your ministry has laid out for these appointments. The first one listed is "familiarity with the workers' compensation system," yet the vice-chair appointee that you are nominating was interviewed last week and acknowledged that she did not have that kind of experience with WCB. She has a fine record as a lawyer, an excellent résumé, but not the top criterion you outlined.

She has, however, made three generous contributions to your Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines. This political stacking of this quasi-judicial body is even more serious because of your Bill 99's attack on the independence of this tribunal. Minister, why won't you accept your responsibility to maintain and protect the independence of this vital tribunal?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** If you had been listening to comments I have made in recent weeks, I have indicated that as we review Bill 99, which is in front of you in committee at the present time, we are quite prepared to consider all amendments and each amendment put forward. If you have some you would wish to make related to WCAT and its function vis-à-vis WCB, we'd certainly be happy to receive them.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, you know full well that the only reason you're considering that is because employers are putting pressure on you. You're not listening to injured workers in terms of reducing their benefits and taking away their pension rights and allowing them to qualify for legitimate claims, so don't hand us that.

The reality is that the three names you submitted, and Ms Ballam was one of them — the original list was given to you by Ron Ellis, the former chair for 12 years. He had an independent process that was always followed where he reviewed applicants, he interviewed them, he decided where the balance was between interests and experience and right and left politics and made a recommendation that was ultimately accepted by the cabinet. The same process was followed this time, and you even signed off on it, but you know — it's an open secret — your Premier killed that list and brought three of his political friends on side.

Mr Ellis stood and fought for the independence of this tribunal and paid for it with his job. Why don't you have the courage to fight for the independence of this important workers' tribunal?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I would just indicate to you that we have listened to injured workers. In fact, the reason

that direct payment, a three-day waiting period and the elimination of compensation for repetitive stress are not in Bill 99 is because we did listen to the injured workers.

Again I would make the offer to the —

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** I was emphasizing the fact that we have responded to the concerns of all the stakeholders, including the injured workers. Certainly if in the future the member opposite has suggestions for changes we can make to WCAT, I would be happy to receive them.

1510

#### ALCOHOL SMUGGLING

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Today I watched the noonhour newscast and saw that you and the Solicitor General had attended a launch of an illegal alcohol initiative this morning. Could you inform me, as the member for Scarborough Centre, my constituents and all members of the Legislative Assembly what this new initiative will achieve and who will be involved in combatting booze smuggling?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** This morning I and the Solicitor General had the opportunity to attend a launch of the new illegal alcohol anti-smuggling initiative and reward incentive program which was funded by the Association of Canadian Distillers and has the full support of the LCBO, the RCMP and the OPP and of course both my ministry and that of the Solicitor General.

For anyone who has information on the smuggling of alcohol and also on the production or manufacture of illegal alcohol, it could be worth up to \$1,000, which is the top reward being offered by Crime Stoppers. We are working with Crime Stoppers in this program. The public can call Crime Stoppers. Everyone knows the number, but I will repeat it: 1-800-222-TIPS. I was very pleased to be present when the president of the Canadian distillers presented a cheque of \$15,000 to Crime Stoppers' Cam Shillington.

Smuggling must be stopped. I'm also pleased to inform the member that the LCBO will be seconding two additional OPP officers from the Ministry of the Solicitor General to work on this initiative.

**Mr Newman:** My constituents in Scarborough Centre have many concerns relating to illegal and smuggled alcohol. They want to know who the victims of smuggling are. Could you inform all members of the Legislative Assembly and consumers what they should be aware of relating to illegal liquor being sold in this province?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** First of all, over \$11 million worth of illegal alcohol was seized last year. We believe the problem is about \$640 million in the province right now from smuggling and the illegal manufacture of alcohol and wine.

This is not a victimless crime. We have concerns about the health hazards with respect to bootlegged alcohol. We went through the warehouse. They had some facilities there being used by some of these bootleggers. There are some big vats of so-called wine that you wouldn't want to touch, let alone drink. That's being sold to the public by bootleggers. This is quite a health hazard.



There's also no stoppage for the sale of this type of illegal alcohol to minors. It's a very huge problem that we want to direct resources to. We will be doing it. This is an excellent example of how government can work with private industry to come up with a solution towards a huge problem in the province.

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. As you're well aware, most of southwestern Ontario today is in a haze of smog. It is the first day we have seen this in June. It is a crisis; it is serious. Children, seniors, people with respiratory illnesses are basically prisoners in their own homes. What we've seen from you has been no action on vehicle emissions. You have promised a smog accord plan. We have seen absolutely no action.

Municipalities have taken their own measures to try to deal with this problem because of your lack of leadership. The Environmental Protection Act, section 346, gives you sweeping powers to take emergency measures to address issues such as today. You, as minister, have the power to undertake initiatives and force compliance on a day like today. Can you outline to the House what emergency measures you have taken today, with the power you have, to deal with the smog problem in Ontario?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I consider the air quality of Ontario a serious issue and a very important issue. Perhaps we are the first government to recognize that it is an important issue. We have taken significant measures already to deal with this very serious problem. In June 1996 we released a smog plan for Ontario to deal over a long period of time with certain targets which were agreed on between different Canadian environment ministers from across this country. I have met with 11 states in the United States which are passing transborder ozone and air quality problems to us. We have amended the gasoline volatility regulation. In fact, we are taking more steps to deal with this problem than any previous government has ever done.

**Mr Agostino:** Simply, it's not good enough. There are seniors today who can't leave their homes. You may be aware that hospital admissions today will go up by 6% to 10% as a result of the smog. You, as minister, have powers under the Environmental Protection Act to take action to force compliance with industries today and to cut back on government services that contribute to the problem. You have failed miserably. There has been no vehicle emission testing program. Your smog accord is somewhere in the bureaucracy; you haven't brought it forward. Frankly, you don't care. You have no concern.

Maybe there's a simple answer. Maybe every Ontarian will get one of these and that way the —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Agostino:** Minister, my question —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Are you kidding? I think you've used your time. Minister.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** In anticipation of this particular question, I did check the air quality index for southwestern Ontario across the whole part of this area. As I

indicated previously, actually the air quality index is quite good in Toronto today. The air quality is good in this particular part of the province, it's moderate in some of the areas that the others represent and therefore, although the member need not wear that gas mask today, I do believe it improves his appearance.

1520

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, for some time now everyone in my community has been saying to you that your latest downloading attack on our community is either going to raise taxes or cut services. Yesterday the editorial board of the Hamilton Spectator added their voice to those of us who have been saying this to you for some time.

They said, "The provincial government's swap of services with municipalities will have a greater impact on property taxpayers in Hamilton-Wentworth and other municipalities than Premier Mike Harris is letting on." Further, they said: "Far from lowering municipal taxes, as the Tories would like, the province's lopsided deal in its present form threatens to wallop property taxpayers."

"The revised cost-sharing leaves Hamilton-Wentworth alone holding the bag for a budget shortfall of anywhere from \$59 million to \$81 million. Regional officials have warned it could translate into a residential property tax increase of 9.2% to 12.4%, or an equivalent reduction in services."

Minister, are you going to refute these numbers? If not, how do you justify doing this to the taxpayers of my community?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Yes, I would refute those numbers, because what they're not taking into consideration is the funding that's coming off the property tax base by taking education off. Some \$2.5 billion worth of tax room will go to municipalities, including the municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth.

We know that the municipalities have the wherewithal to eliminate waste and duplication within their organization. Last year there was the hue and cry about how taxes would have to increase. Municipalities dealt with it quite well. Most municipalities didn't have any tax increase whatsoever. I'm quite confident that competent and efficient municipalities will not have any tax increase next year either.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, I would invite you to meet with local officials personally. If you're going to declare publicly here today that in some fashion officials and elected representatives in my community are fudging the figures and you're also calling the editorial board of the Hamilton Spectator all but liars, then I say to you that you owe it to them to sit down and show your numbers.

They went on to say: "A boastful Harris gave municipal officials sandwiches and pastries when he unveiled the revised plan. Pork and beans would have been more appropriate.... It is unconscionable of the province to send municipalities" — this is the Spec editorial board —



"into next year's budget-setting process saddled with a financial time bomb created by the Harris government."

Minister, I'm asking you on behalf of the taxpayers in my community of Hamilton-Wentworth to withdraw your unfair plan today.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I really do appreciate the dramatics that are put in there.

This is a trade in the services that are being delivered. The province is assuming a number of services and we're asking the municipalities to assume other services so that we can ensure that the waste and duplication in the current system is eliminated.

We know that municipalities last year, when they developed their preliminary budgets, were also concerned that there would be increases. We know that this year when they develop their preliminary budgets, if they don't do anything to address their waste and duplication, they could have tax increases. But we know that when they look at eliminating the obvious waste and duplication that's in the system as a result of the overlap of the delivery of services, they will be able to cope next year. We're anticipating that not only will there not be a tax increase, but by the year 2000 there will probably be a tax decrease.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to see what your familiarity is with this legislation. Help me out on something procedurally, if you will. Bill 108, the Provincial Offences Act; Bill 109, the Public Libraries Act; Bill 139, the Game and Fish Act; Bill 129, a budget bill; Bill 138, the road safety bill; a supply motion and House calendar motion: In your opinion, do you think we would be able to complete these by Thursday evening of this week? If the government wishes to complete them —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Order. Motions.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I just wanted to comment on that, if I could, that the government is more than —

**The Speaker:** This is an interesting thing. It looks like a meeting is breaking out here. I prefer to do motions. Motions? Petitions?

## PETITIONS

### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas Mike Harris and the Progressive Conservative Party in Ontario made a pre-election promise to pass an Ontarians with Disabilities Act if elected; and

"Whereas the resolution introduced by Marion Boyd, MPP, on May 16, 1996, calling on the government to keep its election promise to pass an Ontarians with Disabilities Act was unanimously supported; and

"Whereas no actions have been taken by the government in the direction of creating or passing an Ontarians with Disabilities Act; and

"Whereas persons with a disability in Ontario are not allowed equal rights or equal citizenship due to lack of access in areas including but not restricted to communica-

tion, transportation, housing, employment, education, and the cost of disability is all but ignored by the Ontario government;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris and the Conservative government take measures to ensure the introduction and passage of an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which is in accordance with the needs of persons with a disability in Ontario."

That has been signed by many of my constituents, and I attach my name to that petition as well.

### TRAFFIC SIGNALS

**Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East):** I have a petition signed by 367 people representing 220 homes in the Couchiching Point area of Orillia, as well as Invermara Condominiums, Gwen and Eddies Restaurant, Couchiching Inn, Hot Knots and Mariposa Marinas. The petition states that the residents believe the proposed changes to the above intersection will not improve the safety aspect of the intersection — more dangerous than it is today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas as residents of the Couchiching Point area, we strongly believe the Minister of Transportation's proposed changes in the intersection of Highway 12 and Couchiching Point Road in Orillia will not improve safety conditions;

"Whereas we believe, if anything, the proposed changes will increase the risk of a serious accident because the traffic will be four lanes travelling at a much higher speed than present. Turning left off Couchiching Point Road and turning left on to Couchiching Point Road, across two lanes of traffic moving at 60 kilometres an hour, will be asking for a disaster;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to ask the Ministry of Transportation to install traffic signals now at this intersection before a serious accident occurs causing injury or death."

I have affixed my name to it.

### KIDNEY DIALYSIS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** "Whereas there is no dialysis treatment currently available in the Cornwall area; and

"Whereas this lack of local medical treatment forces dialysis patients throughout Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and beyond to drive to Ottawa or Kingston several times each week, even during dangerous winter weather conditions, to receive the basic medical attention, incurring unnecessary stress, cost and inconvenience; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health promised on April 24, 1996, to rectify this medical shortfall by establishing a dialysis treatment facility in Cornwall; and

"Whereas the promise made by the Minister of Health has to date not been kept, resulting in local patients and their families and friends continuing to drive to Ottawa and Kingston for treatment several times a week in the abovenoted conditions;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure that the Minister of Health follows through on the commitment made last April to set

up the long-awaited dialysis and much-needed health services for Cornwall area residents."

I've also signed this petition.

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I have a petition to present on behalf of the member for Victoria-Haliburton.

"Whereas black bear populations in Ontario are healthy, with between 75,000 and 100,000 animals, and their numbers are stable or increasing in many areas of the province; and

"Whereas black bear hunting is enjoyed by over 20,000 hunters annually in Ontario and black bears are a well-managed, renewable resource; and

"Whereas bear hunting replaces natural mortality and reduces cannibalism among bears; and

"Whereas hunting regulations are based on sustained yield principles and all forms of hunting are needed to optimize the socioeconomic benefits associated with hunting; and

"Whereas the value of the spring bear hunt to tourist operators in northern Ontario is \$30 million annually, generating about 500 person-years of employment; and

"Whereas animal rights activists have launched a campaign of misinformation and economic rhetoric to ban bear hunting and end our hunting heritage in Ontario, ignoring the enormous impact this would have on the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government protect our hunting heritage and continue to support all current forms of black bear hunting."

1530

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** "Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role

of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I will affix my signature to this.

### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by members of the United Steelworkers of America.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the introduction and passage of Bill 7 in 1995 legalized the use of replacement workers — scabs — in strikes and lockouts; and

"Whereas the use of scabs has contributed to lengthening the bitter dispute between S.A. Armstrong Ltd in Scarborough and the United Steelworkers of America Local 6917; and

"Whereas the strike at S.A. Armstrong began its second year in late April; and

"Whereas, as this case demonstrates, the legalizing of scabs makes the democratic decision of workers to withdraw their labour meaningless;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to rescind the Bill 7 changes to the Labour Relations Act which allow the hiring of 'replacement workers,' and thereby restore the legitimate bargaining power of workers who have chosen to organize themselves into a union for the purposes of securing a collective agreement, and thereby to restore some small measure of fairness between the unequal forces of labour and management in this province."

On behalf of my caucus colleagues in the NDP, I proudly add my name to theirs.

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** I have a petition here signed by hundreds of people. It says:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce measures to allow, during lunch periods in public schools, instruction in the religious doctrines of families who seek such programs, and that such instruction be allowed to be presented by clergy and other recognized religious leaders."

### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical



care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature to it.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have more petitions, this time from members of OPSEU from all across the province, forwarded to me by Leah Casselman, their president.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas workers' health and safety must be protected in the province of Ontario, especially the right to refuse work which is likely to endanger a worker, the right to know about workplace hazards and the right to participate in joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations help protect workers' health and safety and workers' rights in this area; and

"Whereas the government's discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act threatens workers' health and safety by proposing to deregulate the existing act and regulations to reduce or eliminate workers' health and safety rights and to reduce enforcement of health and safety laws by the Ministry of Labour; and

"Whereas workers must have a full opportunity to be heard about this proposed drastic erosion in their present protections from injuries and occupational diseases;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the present provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations. Further we, the undersigned, demand that public hearings on the discussion paper be held in at least 20 communities throughout Ontario."

I wish they were doing that with WCB as they had committed to, and I add my name to these OPSEU members.

#### HIGHWAY NOISE BARRIERS

**Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia):** I have a petition from the residents of Sarnia.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residences adjacent to the location of the third phase of the noise barrier along Highway 402 in Sarnia face the highway; and

"Whereas the noise barrier would obstruct our view by replacing it with a wall;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the third phase of the noise barrier project be abandoned and our view be left intact."

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** The people of the province are incensed about the Mike Harris plan to kill debate in the Legislature. We're getting petitions coming in from all across the province, certainly from my riding of Port Arthur, Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. The petition reads:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram through legislation more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;" —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** That's a shame.

**Mr Gravelle:** It's shameful.

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to abandon these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I am very proud to sign my name to that petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by members of Local 105 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers from and around my community of Hamilton-Wentworth. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre has provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre has made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre."

I proudly add my name to theirs.

#### COURT DECISION

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** My petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Court of Appeal has ruled female toplessness is legal in all public places; and

"Whereas we believe only designated areas be enforced;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly and the Solicitor General of Ontario as follows:

"Out of respect for our seniors who built this country and our children who shall inherit it, we ask this ruling be amended and our petition be tantamount to those who are in agreement with this ruling as it exists, whereas our beliefs are protected and valued by our government."

I have attached my name to that petition as well.

1540

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### SUPPLY ACT, 1997

##### LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 1997

Mr Johnson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to authorize the payment of certain amounts for the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1997 / Projet de loi 143, Loi autorisant le paiement de certaines sommes destinées à la fonction publique pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 1997.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Does the minister have a brief statement?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I really have no statement. I'm happy to introduce this bill on behalf of the Minister of Finance. It deals with routine spending of the province of Ontario. I'll simply leave it at that.

##### CITY OF TORONTO

##### AMENDMENT ACT, 1997

##### LOI DE 1997 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Ms Lankin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 144, An Act to amend the City of Toronto Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 144, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la cité de Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry? It is carried.

Does the member have a brief statement?

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** The City of Toronto Act, 1997, as you are well aware, is commonly referred to as the government's megacity bill. I am proud today to sponsor this private member's bill which would amend the megacity legislation to effect a different ratio of representation in what will become the ward of East York under the new megacity. Currently, the megacity legislation provides for only two councillors for the ward of East York. My bill would increase that number to three, which would ensure that there is more equitable representation based on a councillor-to-resident population ratio and also that there would be a more effective community council that could play a role in bringing local democracy to the residents of East York.

#### CITY OF SARNIA ACT, 1997

Mr Boushy moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr69, An Act respecting the City of Sarnia.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

*House in committee of the whole.*

##### JOB GROWTH AND TAX REDUCTION ACT, 1997

##### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CROISSANCE DE L'EMPLOI ET LA RÉDUCTION DES IMPÔTS

Consideration of Bill 129, An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget / Projet de loi 129, Loi visant à stimuler la croissance de l'emploi, à réduire les impôts et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1997.

*Interjections.*

**The Second Deputy Chair (Mr Bert Johnson):** Order.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I'm not suggesting you are in charge. I am asking a question because you are in charge. I want to know if you will allow strangers sitting in the House.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** I want to address the member for Algoma. Standing order 105 gives permission for the parliamentary assistant to sit in the front row and for the staff to be there.

Are there any amendments, and if so, to which section? Are there any questions or comments, and if so, to which section?

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** The question I have is, why is this government in the first two sections, the amendment to paragraph 1 and the amendment in subsection (2), going ahead with its tax cut when at the same time its budget documents clearly show that we're still running an annual deficit of somewhere close to \$7 billion or \$8 billion per year, when the interest on the public debt has gone from \$7.1 billion to \$9.1 billion, an increase of \$2 billion in interest payments, just in a matter of two or three years?



Why is the government proceeding with this action at this time, when the recognized worldwide bond rating agencies, such as Moody's and Standard and Poor's, are not giving this government any higher rating than they gave the last government? One of the main reasons they're not is because they think it's ill advised at this point in time to proceed with a tax cut when we're still adding to the public debt of this province.

My question to the parliamentary assistant is, why are you proceeding with this part of the bill at this time when it makes absolutely no sense whatsoever from a responsible fiscal viewpoint?

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I would say that we are proceeding with the tax cut because our plan obviously is working. If you look at the economy today you will see that the number of jobs in Ontario is increasing, the general economy is on the way up. You just have to look at housing starts, you have to look at the public confidence.

You mention also that tax revenue is falling. I have the figures here. I would say tax revenue is projected to increase by \$111 million, or 0.3%, in 1997-98, as the current economic expansion continues. It has already started and it can only accumulate as time passes. Revenues are also projected to be up in retail sales tax, corporations tax, gasoline tax, fuel tax, tobacco tax, land transfer tax, just to name a few. It's a different philosophy, as I can point out to the member for Kingston and The Islands. We feel that we are going to get to the prosperity that Ontario once enjoyed through the tax cut. You will never agree to that, but we are using the current statistics to show that our plan is working.

1550

**Mr Gerretsen:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: First of all, I do not like to be misquoted in the House. I did not say that the revenues in this province were falling.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** It's not a point of order.

**Mr Gerretsen:** It sure is a point of order. I said, "Why is the government going ahead with this tax cut when the annual deficit in the province of Ontario is still in the \$6-billion to \$7-billion range?" In actual fact, if the parliamentary assistant would take a look at page 63 of her own budget document for this year, when you look at the total revenue for this province, you will see that in this year it is going to be \$48.4 billion, whereas last year it was \$49.4 billion. So you're incorrect.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** That is not a point of order.

**Ms Bassett:** The other thing I would say to the member for Kingston and The Islands is that those are the forecasts. Second, we are going ahead with our program, because the evidence is that this program for restoring prosperity is working. We feel that although the deficit may remain at \$6.6 billion, it is going down as planned, and by the year 2000-01 it will be eliminated. There's no question about that. It's just that we may be going a little more slowly than if you were in office. You might plan to cut it next year. We think it's better to use the statistics and the programs we have in place that are already showing they're working.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I do indeed have a first question to my colleague, the parliamentary assistant for finance. It refers specifically to the Income Tax Act, part I of Bill 129.

My question is as follows: I would like to know the impact of the second part of the Income Tax Act for an Ontarian making \$25,000 per year, \$60,000 per year, \$100,000 per year, \$150,000 per year, \$200,000 per year, \$500,000 and, finally, an Ontarian making \$1 million.

My question is twofold. For instance, if a person makes \$1 million, with the second part of the tax cut how much will he or she benefit, cumulatively, from the first instalment, inclusive of these instalments in the ranges I've mentioned: \$25,000, \$60,000, \$100,000, \$150,000, \$200,000, \$500,000 and \$1 million?

**Ms Bassett:** I say to the member for Lake Nipigon that we can supply you with every single answer. I'm not a computer; I can't go through every single line. We can, probably, by the end of the hour. In terms of the person with a \$1-million income and the tax on that, the increase that you presume he is getting in his savings will be offset by the progressive Fair Share health tax. You don't answer that, which is a progressive tax, and it goes up with the more income you bring in. When you mentioned that the rich are going to benefit much more by the tax cut —

**Mr Pouliot:** We'll ask for them.

**Ms Bassett:** I am pointing out, though, that this offsets the fact that the person making \$1 million, you would imply, would be getting more dollars in terms of his tax cut. But he is going to be paying a huge amount more in terms of his Fair Share health levy. It's a progressive tax, and that's the way it should be. The people with more money should be paying more for their health, to offset the ones who don't and to offset, I suppose, the savings that would be made on the tax cut.

**Mr Wildman:** I appreciate the partial answer from the parliamentary assistant. Basically, what she is saying is that for one of the income levels my colleague from Nipigon asked about, they will get a certain cut — she didn't say how much, which we need to know — on average —

**Ms Bassett:** I said I'd get it for you.

**Mr Wildman:** We've got until midnight, so we've got lots of time. We need to know that, but she said it would be offset by a huge increase in another tax, which she described as progressive. I'm sure she would understand that before we can pass this into law, before we can move to third reading, we actually need to know some of the figures. It would be most irresponsible for us as members of this assembly to pass a tax act that is of such significance without at least being given some figures.

We need to know, as my colleague indicated, what, on average, various levels of income will benefit from these cuts, and if the parliamentary assistant wishes to argue that these cuts will be offset by other tax increases, we need to know those figures as well. My colleague has asked about various levels of income. I would be interested in some others, but I will await the answers for the levels my colleague from Nipigon has put on the table before I might raise other income levels, because I'm quite interested in the parliamentary assistant's view that



these cuts in income taxes will be offset for those at the upper level of income by other increases in taxes.

Not that I doubt her word and not that I question the view she's putting forward, but it would be most helpful if we actually had the figures so that we could tell whether she's correct in her view. It has been stated in this House by certain members that about the top 10% of income earners, I believe, would get about 66% of the income tax break that is being offered by the government in this income tax scheme which is embodied in Bill 129, which is before the committee.

That hardly seems progressive, but since the parliamentary assistant is arguing that this is indeed a progressive move because it's related to other taxes, we need to know the numbers. I'm sure she understands that. If she can give us the numbers for the levels my colleague has requested, then I'll determine what other numbers we should also get.

**Ms Bassett:** Certainly we will work out the specific numbers that the member for Lake Nipigon wants. We can get them.

Let me say to the member for Algoma, though, that there's no question that the less you make, the bigger your tax percentage is going to be. Let me read out: for the less than \$14,900 income group, 41.4% is the average Ontario tax cut when fully implemented. I've got a whole series of numbers. If you want me to read through them, I can read through them. From \$19,175 to \$23,529, you get a 32.3% Ontario tax cut when fully implemented. I'm jumping down: \$37,800 to \$44,049, you get a 30.5% Ontario tax cut when fully implemented. I can jump to those earning \$102,500 to \$122,999: You get a 23.2% Ontario tax cut when fully implemented. As you see, it's less. When you get to \$247,500 and over, you get a 17.9% Ontario tax cut when fully implemented. Just to point that out.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** The member for High Park had an inquiry.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Fort York.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Fort York, I'm sorry.

**Mr Marchese:** That's okay. It's hard to remember where we come from.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** I've made that mistake before.

**Mr Marchese:** That's all right, Chair. There are too many people in this House to remember.

To the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, we appreciate that kind of breakdown. It isn't for our benefit, I should say; it's for the benefit of those who are watching this program and of course ultimately paying for this tax cut. It isn't just for me to know. It's true that it's good for me to know because the public I represent wants me to share it with them, because presumably I have that information ahead of them. I need to know this information now, the public needs to know now, those who read the Hansard — and they don't get it any more, so it's even more complicated to have access to this information — need it now; we don't need it later.

**1600**

As we get this breakdown, 32% of the Ontario tax cut if they're making between \$19,000 and \$23,000 means nothing to me, and I'm sure it means nothing to those

who earn \$20,000. What people want to know is, what is the tax saving? Not just when fully implemented, because some people will understand that in terms of the 30% income tax; others want to know what that 7.5% is, what that 15% is, what it means to get a 21% tax cut, and when fully implemented. People need to know, in my view, dollar figures. "What do I get back if I earn only \$23,000? What does it mean in my pocket?" What does it mean to the person getting \$1 million in his pocket, either when fully implemented or with the 21% or 22% tax cut you've already provided, whatever that is?

We don't want this at the end of the debate. We would like these figures as soon as possible so we can make statements connected to this and so the public has access to that information as soon as possible.

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** Use the percentages.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Member for Fort York, was there something else you wanted to clarify?

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Chair, just to respond to the member for Huron, because she's connected to this.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** No. Please don't. Please address your questions to me for the parliamentary assistant.

**Mr Marchese:** Through you, Mr Chair, of course. The percentages don't mean anything to anyone.

**Mrs Johns:** Of course they do.

**Mr Marchese:** The member for Huron is speaking to you, Mr Chair, not to me. She's saying percentages mean something to her. But the general public don't operate this way. They don't have a clue. Even people with university degrees can't figure some of this stuff out unless they have a degree in mathematics. She knows that. But the parliamentary assistant knows this as well. I think she knows better than the member for Huron that people want to know, "What does it mean in my pocket if I earn \$20,000 and I get this tax cut?" — a dollar figure, not percentages.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** I think the parliamentary assistant understands.

**Ms Bassett:** I just want to say to the member for Fort York that we are getting you the figures, the percentages of all these figures the member for Lake Nipigon wanted. We're just working them out. You will have them. Nobody is hiding them. If you want them in dollars — most people think in terms of a 5% cut in the provincial income tax rate or whatever. It's fine to translate it into dollars and cents in relation to an income. We're not trying to hide anything. We shall give it.

*Interjections.*

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Please address your comments to the Chair.

I'm going in rotation, and I now recognize the member for Nepean.

**Mr Baird:** I'd like to ask the parliamentary assistant if she could confirm her comments. Is she saying that the more money you make, on a percentage basis, the less your tax cut is, that those making less than \$50,000 get a disproportionately higher tax cut than those making over? Could she confirm that?

**Ms Bassett:** I certainly can. You can just look at the charts — they're all different charts — that absolutely



show this. The person I started off with, earning \$14,900, gets a percentage cut of 41.4%.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** The people of Ontario, certainly the people in the riding of Oakwood, are saying this government has promised them this tax cut and they don't see it. They say they don't see it in the amount of money they have in their paycheques, they don't see any real money coming back to them. I think the question that has to be asked of the parliamentary assistant is —

*Interjections.*

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Order. Members for Fort York and for Huron, I'm warning you. We are in committee of the whole. I can't have these conversations going on about me and I will not.

The Chair recognizes the member for Oakwood. I'm sorry to interrupt.

**Mr Colle:** I think it would be helpful if the parliamentary assistant showed us the money. We would like to see not percentages, not vague references; we want to see what this tax cut really means to ordinary people.

I'm sure you get it in Listowel and in your home town, Mr Chairman. People are saying, "We hear a lot of talk about the tax cut, but we don't notice that we have more money in our pockets." They're also saying, "The city hall has closed down, the hospital is about to be closed down, junior kindergarten is gone, we have to pay more user fees at the arena, more user fees to swim, more user fees to go to the library." They're saying, "How much does that really end up costing me in the long run?"

That's why I think it's important. I want to see what a millionaire now brings home because of this bill. That's why we want to see the real figures. Does the millionaire now bring home or have an extra \$100,000 in his or her pocket because of this bill?

What's really at the heart of the matter is that if you look at part XI of Bill 129 — in part I, the government is giving away a tax cut with money they don't have. Certainly I don't run across people who say the government has extra money. Then in part XI, the same government which just gave away this money, up to \$5 billion — in the last section, the bill enacts the Ontario Loan Act, 1997, and authorizes the borrowing of up to \$7.5 billion in total for the consolidated revenue fund.

The average citizen is asking, does it make sense for a government to forgo or to give away \$5 billion in tax cuts that ordinary citizens don't see? I get that over and over again, people saying, "I haven't seen anything from this tax cut." How does it make economic or fiscal sense for the government on one hand to give away this money and then go out and borrow \$7.5 billion? That is the real money question ordinary Ontarians are asking, especially in light of the fact that they're seeing some very negative fallout in the community, all over Ontario.

In Toronto, for instance, we have 10 hospitals that are about to be closed down. The emergency department in my own community, in Northwestern hospital at Keele at Eglinton, is about to be closed down in September. Some 45,000 people a year use the emergency department in Northwestern hospital. As a result of this government through this bill, the way I read it, giving away money in a tax cut, they're saying, "Is the price for that tax cut the closing down of the emergency department?" Those are

the fundamental questions that I think the parliamentary assistant has to answer.

We are going to lose Wellesley Hospital here in Toronto. One of the finest downtown hospitals anywhere in North America or the world is about to face the axe. Women's College Hospital, one of the finest hospitals, delivering — my second brother was born in that hospital. We have all had mothers and sisters who have gone to that hospital and had excellent treatment. We're going to lose that hospital. We've got Doctors Hospital. I don't know if you're aware of Doctors Hospital, Mr Chair. It's a fine little hospital off College Street that serves the newcomers in our community. That's about to be closed down.

**1610**

In the context of this bill people are saying, "Is it wise for the government to close a hospital," not just one hospital but up to 30 in Ontario, 10 in Metro, "where that money is going maybe to millionaires?" Do you know what the economists too are saying? Not only are the ordinary people in the street questioning it, a lot of economists are saying, "How do you track that tax cut?"

Let's say that millionaire gets \$100,000 in his or her pocket. How do you know that millionaire isn't spending that money down in Acapulco, for instance? That millionaire maybe is buying a condo in Acapulco with that \$100,000. At least the hospital worker who's got a job at Northwestern Hospital or Doctors Hospital gets his 12 bucks an hour, and when he brings home that paycheque, that hospital worker is spending that money buying bread and shoes and a shirt in downtown Toronto or downtown Grimsby or downtown Port Colborne.

I know that is a way of explaining it in layperson's terms, but I think it's a fundamental economic question. If you're really going to use that money to stimulate the economy here in Metro, in Ontario, in Kapuskasing, you have to spend the money locally. As you know, what's happening more and more is that a lot of wealthy people can spend the money offshore. I would like to have some data from the ministry in terms of how much of that tax cut money is being spent offshore and if they've done any tracking of that.

If we get that kind of information, I think we'll see that a lot of those big dollars that are being given to the well-to-do people of Ontario — I bet more than half of that tax cut is probably being spent in places like Acapulco. I can see a lot of condos being bought in the Cayman Islands. I can see a lot of these properties on the Riviera being bought up by Ontario residents with a lot of money, or they have taken that tax cut money and spent it in Acapulco.

The problem with that from an economic perspective is that money was supposed to be spent to stimulate the Ontario economy, yet what it's doing is stimulating the Acapulco economy or it's stimulating the economy in Saint-Tropez or wherever the jet set go these days, I don't know — Morocco for all we know.

Wouldn't it make more sense from an economic perspective — I wonder if Standard and Poor's and Dominion Bond Rating Service and the other economic forecasters aren't trying to say the same thing I'm trying to say, that the reason they oppose the tax cut is because



you can't track that expenditure, that it's better to spend that money in Orillia, and for all we know, spend it at Rama, but at least it's staying in Orillia, it's staying in Ontario, but that when you give that tax cut to the well-to-do, you don't know where the money is flying to. Therefore, it does not create the economic activity and the real jobs here in Ontario — in Orillia, in Grimsby, in Brampton, in Kapuskasing.

It's not just the opposition saying that; I think it's the people who are experienced in this area. We've heard the comments from three of the major-domos of the financial world. It hasn't just been Gerry Phillips or Gilles Pouliot or the critics in the opposition. We've had Moody's, the Dominion Bond Rating Service and Standard and Poor's saying, "We really caution the Ontario government." That's why they haven't improved our credit rating.

I think they are doing something fundamentally contrary to good, basic economics 101. If you look at basic economics, it says that before you spend money or give it away, take care of your debt. As you know, the basic contradiction in this whole Bill 129 is that they're giving away money and then in the last paragraph they're trying to keep it really low profile. As I mentioned, it's an outstanding amount of money they're going to borrow. If you vote for this bill, you're sanctioning the borrowing of \$7.5 billion.

If you look at what the public is saying, the public in Ontario and all across Canada were given the same option in the last federal election. You had the Reformers and the Conservatives going door to door saying, "We want to give you a tax cut." As you know, that platform did not sell. People said: "Hey, wait a minute now. We know what is happening in Ontario with the tax cut. We know there's a price to pay. There's no free lunch with tax cuts. We know a tax cut means you have to close hospitals." People in Ontario are very clear on that. They understand that. I think that's why they rejected it.

As you know, the Republicans of Bob Dole ran on the same ill-fated Reaganomics approach of the tax cut first. They rejected the tax cut unilaterally, and Bob Dole went nowhere with that same policy.

I think if you ask the people of Ontario today, after two years of witnessing what a tax cut means, they would tell us that this Bill 129 is not what they want. I think what they're saying is, "I'd rather not pay those user fees for my prescription drugs." That's what the seniors are telling me. Every time I go into a drugstore or into a seniors' home, they're all saying, "We hate that Mike Harris user fee on prescription drugs." They say it over and over again. I say to the seniors: "Well, don't you like that tax cut the Mike Harris government has given you? You can pay for those user fees now because you got that tax cut." Do you know what the seniors say? They say: "We haven't seen this tax cut. Where is it?"

What is fundamentally wrong with the approach of Bill 129 is that the people who need a break the most, the people who can least afford to pay user fees, are the ones saying: "We don't agree with Bill 129; we would rather have the government help us in paying for our prescription drugs; we would rather have the government keep rent control; we would rather have the government build good, affordable housing for seniors and the poor than

this tax cut," which they think is really a boondoggle for the economy of Acapulco. That's what they think it is. They think that's where all the money is going.

I agree with some of my colleagues on the NDP side. What we're saying through this committee of the whole process is that we want the government to show us the money. We want the government to show the seniors the money. We want the government to show the unemployed hospital workers and the nurses the money. If you look at the consequences of the bill, how many nurses are going to be laid off because of this tax cut in Bill 129? We know how difficult it is to get nurses. We know how difficult it is to get prompt services in hospitals now.

I was talking to a person last night. He said, "I had to wait over an hour and a half in emergency for a simple problem." You have to wait an hour and a half. When they move and close six or seven emergency departments in Metro Toronto, how much longer will that wait be in emergency? That's what it's all about, this centralization of these hospitals that look more and more like airports. I don't think the people of Ontario want mega-hospitals; they want their community hospitals. They want a hospital where they don't have to wait an hour or two or three in emergency.

They don't want all this mad rush to day surgery. You talk to a lot of seniors and they say, "Every time I have to go to the hospital now, they want me at home by noon." A lot of seniors cannot cope with being at home by themselves after they have just had a surgical operation, but the doctors tell them: "Sorry, we can't keep you in the hospital. It costs too much money. We get rewarded if we get you out of the hospital quicker." So you're sicker, quicker, out on the street again.

1620

This is where the money is going maybe, or not going, so I think a lot of us on this side would say two basic things: First of all, before you reward people with a tax cut, make sure that the hospitals provide the level of service we're used to, make sure junior kindergarten is restored, and make sure that you take away those user fees for prescription drugs. Take care of those things first. Then, down the road when you don't have to borrow any more, when we know we've got our hospitals funded, we know we've got our schools funded, you can look at the potential of tax cuts. You've got to put first things first.

Everybody will tell you now, as you know — it's undeniable — no matter what political party you belong to, people are worried about those fundamental basic good things that were part of Ontario's government, where they made sure they went out of their way to provide a good education to everybody and good hospital care to everybody. Now we're seeing that jeopardized, and they're questioning whether or not bills like Bill 129 are jeopardizing this because this government is on this very narrow ideological bent, the supply side economics, which has been debunked. Reagan tried, and we know what happened when he did it. The United States went into about \$3 trillion in debt. They tried it; it didn't work there.

Even Ralph Klein didn't try to do this double-edged, burning the candle at both ends, whatever you call it, where you essentially try and tackle the deficit and give



a tax cut at the same time. Even Ralph Klein, who is a fiscal Conservative, who is a rational Conservative, it seems, said don't do it. First of all, what you've got to do is control your deficit, and don't cut hospitals at the expense of the tax cut. But here in this bill —

**Mr Gerretsen:** Or education, for that matter.

**Mr Colle:** I mentioned education when you weren't here. I said that was also important. It is true, and I don't think it's something that is of a partisan political nature.

Talking about education, one thing that a lot of people are saying too is they really wonder if you look at the tax cut and what it's doing to post-secondary education, the cost of it. We see that a lot of young people now are not finding employment opportunities, so they're going back to school. As they try to go back to school, they see that tuitions are going through the roof, a 30% increase. They can't afford college or university. They can't get a job. As you know, there is 17% to 20% unemployment in youth. They go back to school and they can't afford school. Then, if they go to school, they're told to go into massive debt.

You wonder whether some of that money that is going towards this tax cut as the government proposes here in section 1 of the Income Tax Act — let's say you told the wealthy especially: "Hey, listen, you can afford to wait for your tax cut for a couple more years because you're just going to spend that money in Acapulco anyway. So don't buy that condominium in Acapulco this year or next year. Go and buy the Acapulco condominium maybe in the year 2002." Either give that money instead to some of those young people so they can get some help in jobs or lower the tuition for universities.

That's the fundamental question I'm asking about this bill. How does it address that fundamental question, the fact you shouldn't be borrowing money, you shouldn't be closing hospitals, raising tuition fees, closing junior kindergarten down, charging user fees and giving that kind of money to a tax cut? I think it goes back to the original question: You've got to show us the money. You've got to show us how much that millionaire is getting in real dollars, not in percentages, and I want to know where they're spending it. I want to know if you've been tracking how much money is going to Acapulco, how much money is going to Morocco, how much money is going to the Falkland Islands, for all we know. We don't know where the money is going, but I do know that those hospital workers, the nurses in one of the hospitals about to be closed, spend the money locally. Whether they can track that, that's the fundamental type of research I hope the government has done, because this is a fundamental shift in the way our province has been run.

When you do something fundamentally different, you need to have that kind of analysis done, and I would hope the Minister of Finance or the parliamentary assistant can give us that kind of research to show us what happens with this money in the tax cut, where it goes. Would it be better spent to keep it in the hands of the hospital worker or the teacher's aide or the junior kindergarten teacher, and would they not create more job stimulus by spending the money locally on local services, local goods? That is the fundamental information we need before we proceed down the road with Bill 129, because

you can't argue that every one of our communities wants to see the money spent locally.

I'm afraid, as I said, a lot of this money that's going out in tax cuts — I guess it's going to be up to \$5 billion when they get through — is not going to be spent even within Canada, never mind in Grimsby. It's going to be spent who knows where. Maybe the new hot spot is Shanghai or somewhere. We don't know. I think we need that kind of tracking information, because when you make this fundamental shift, and Bill 129 is very fundamental, we want to know where this money goes, and would it be better spent on our schools like Queen's University in Kingston and all our good universities, our high schools and our elementary schools? Those are the fundamental questions I hope get answered.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Does the member for St Andrew-St Patrick wish to respond?

**Ms Bassett:** I'm happy to have the opportunity to reply to the member for Oakwood. I must say to the member for Oakwood, whom I've known for quite a while now as I have made my way around during the federal election and the provincial election here in the same area, you really remind me of my days as a newspaper writer when I used to think of the most sensational heading and then I would add everything together, on teachers' salaries or whatever, and put it at the top in order to get the headline. You are doing exactly the same thing, and I don't blame you. You're in the opposition. Naturally you're going to be trying to create this horrendous story of millionaires walking away with the loot, taking money away from the poor in the province.

The fact is that when you say you want to know what millionaires are getting in the tax cut, if you had been looking at figures, you would know that only 0.5% of people in this province make more than —

**Mr Wildman:** Yes, and we want to know how much they're getting.

1630

**Ms Bassett:** You're going to be getting it — make more than \$247,000 a year, and yet you have blown it into this amazing story as if everybody was going to be getting that when it's a tiny, infinitesimal percentage of the population who get a few more tax dollars.

I also want to point out that 64% of the benefits from this tax cut will be concentrated on middle-income Ontarians earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 a year. When you say that people don't notice that they're getting a little break in their tax cut, I don't know where you are. When I go out along St Clair West in your riding, people are all happy if they can get a little bit of a tax cut. In fact, it's amazing to me that we are living in a country and living in a province where people might object to a tax cut. After having had to live through 10 years of Liberal and NDP government when there were 65 tax increases, it's absolutely ludicrous, when we come along with a tax cut, to say, "What's happening, what's happening?" and question that.

In so far as looking at our using the tax cut to fund the health and hospital restructuring is concerned, as the Minister of Health says almost daily, we're not going into the health restructuring and closing of hospitals; what we're doing is restructuring for the new millennium.



We can't afford to deliver health services the way we did in my day when I was young. You go into a hospital today for an operation, which might have kept you there 10 days in the past, and you come back within the same day, often within four hours, so you don't need the beds in the same numbers as you did in the past. You don't need nursing care as much in the hospitals as you do in the community. That is what the Minister of Health has said time and time again. Let's move the nursing care from the hospitals to the community. We're trying to keep people in their homes much longer, where people can be happier, people can be healthier. It has nothing to do with saving dollars in this particular case; it's spending dollars much more wisely.

Frances Lankin, for example, who was your Minister of Health, was the person who started on this matter of restructuring hospitals. Michael Dexter, who has written books on it, is around saying how hospitals will be restructured to meet the needs of a new delivery of health care systems.

To come back to your point, Mr Colle, about the little bit of money people get, before the Ontario budget, people who had — I want to talk about a single senior with a total income of \$20,000 that he gets from his old age security and a pension. Before the Ontario budget he paid \$895. After the first two Ontario tax cuts he would have paid \$755; after the first four Ontario tax cuts it goes down to \$695; and after full implementation, \$625. Every dollar counts.

A family of four, with one earner with an income of \$25,000 and two children: The Ontario personal income tax payable before the Ontario budget was \$505. After the first two Ontario tax cuts that goes down by half, really, to \$280; after the first four Ontario tax cuts, to \$160; and after full implementation, to \$35. Who can argue that we aren't going in the right direction? Why would we not be praising going in the direction of having less tax?

**Mr Pouliot:** I thank the parliamentary assistant for the answer. Let me, for the benefit of the people of Ontario, the people who are watching, and for our own edification, repeat the question. A family of four earns \$25,000 per annum, in a year. At this stage of the tax cut, since the beginning, how much money per year will that family of four be saving? The next stage is \$60,000; then a family of four earning \$100,000 will result in how much saving; \$150,000; \$200,000 per year; \$500,000 per year; finally, a family of four earning \$1 million. You see, we wish to know in terms of dollars how much a family of four earning \$25,000, in one case, will be saving and progressively up to \$1 million; in terms of dollars, how much each of them will save.

**Ms Bassett:** Let me answer that because I have three of those and then the rest we have to compute out. For the person earning \$23,000 to \$28,000, if that's close enough for you, the average tax cut is 31.8% —

**Mr Wildman:** No, money.

**Ms Bassett:** Just a minute, because we think of taxes in percentage — or \$450.

**Mr Wildman:** Four hundred and fifty?

**Ms Bassett:** Four hundred and fifty. That's quite a bit if you're earning that money.

The next bracket you asked about is \$53,000 to \$67,000, the next bracket we have. That person gets a tax cut of \$1,675, or 30.3%, which is considerable. The next one you asked about was \$200,000. We have it broken down from \$172,500 to \$247,500. That person gets a tax cut of \$5,815 or — the percentage is way down — 19.6%. As I said before, anybody earning over \$247,000, which is only 0.5% of the population, gets a tax cut of \$15,075, or 17.9%. When you get beyond that, we are getting that number to compute the difference.

I find those dollars considerable savings, and happier news is the direction it's going.

**Mr Wildman:** The advantage of committee of the whole is that members in the assembly can have an exchange and get specific information, have questions answered about the legislation we're dealing with. It is very helpful, and without any disrespect for my friend from Oakwood, we here are attempting to find specific information so that we can determine whether this bill is going to achieve what the government says it will; that is, stimulate job growth. We're not here to make third reading or second reading speeches, but just to get the information, and I appreciate the parliamentary assistant giving us that.

If I am to understand the figures she just gave us correctly, is she saying then that in round terms a family of four making over \$250,000, that makes approximately 10 times the family of four that gets \$25,000 — so they make about 10 times the amount of someone at the bottom end, but they're getting 30 times as great a tax cut. In other words, they're getting over \$15,000 in their pocket —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wildman:** I know why the member doesn't want to hear about the real dollars. They're getting over \$15,000 back, but the person who makes one tenth of what they make is only getting \$450 back. In other words, the person who makes 10 times as much gets 30 times as much of a tax break. That really doesn't seem very fair. Why aren't they only getting 10 times as much? Ten times as much still would be a great amount, but why 30 times as much? That really does seem unfair. I'm just wondering why on earth a government would do that.

If an individual makes \$250,000, that's 10 times as much as the person who makes \$25,000, but in terms of cash in the pocket or in the bank account or in the condominium in Acapulco —

**Mrs Johns:** Create jobs.

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**Mr Wildman:** — or the jobs they may or may not create on Main Street, we've got to understand that the person who makes \$25,000 and gets \$450 back is not really going to be creating too many jobs in Ontario. But the person who makes \$250,000, I'll concede, if that person were to invest the \$15,000 in Ontario, it might create a job.

My concern is this: I'm asking about equity. That person who is making \$250,000 is already at an advantage. That person is making 10 times as much as a person who is making \$25,000 — they're doing all right in life — but they're getting 30 times the tax cut. I just



don't understand. If they were getting 10 times the tax cut, that would still mean they were at a great advantage but you might understand it. But they're not getting 10 times the tax cut, they're getting three times that; they're getting 30 times as much.

I can't understand. Why on earth would a government that believes in equity, a government that believes in equality, a government that believes in helping people, be helping those who have at the expense of those who haven't? I don't understand that. Really, what is this? Why is it this government believes that the person who makes \$250,000 needs more money, but the person who makes \$25,000 doesn't need as much money? It would seem to me that the person who makes \$25,000 could use the \$15,000 a lot more than the person who makes \$250,000. If we were really going to be equitable about this, why not give the person at the bottom end more than the person at the top end? That would make a lot more sense.

*Interruption.*

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Order. I want to explain to those in the gallery that we appreciate your interest in being here, but there are absolutely no demonstrations or anything or I'll ask you to leave.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm sorry I provoked that, sir.

It would make sense, obviously, that the person who is making \$25,000 a year and has a family of four needs more money than the person who makes \$250,000 and has a family of four. Obviously, the person who has only got \$25,000 income needs more money than the person who has \$250,000. Surely we can all concede that.

Since the parliamentary assistant earlier wanted to talk about percentages, why wouldn't the Minister of Finance and his brilliant staff who are here to help you have devised a plan that would give the people at the bottom end a substantially higher percentage tax break than the person at the top end? When I say "substantially," I mean so that the individual who makes \$25,000 a year is getting at least a tenth of the dollars that the person at the top end is getting.

We understand that percentages don't feed kids. Dollars do. You can't say, "I got a pretty good percentage, so we'll be able to buy more groceries." What determines the amount of groceries you can buy is how many real loonies you've got in your pocket. The amount of groceries you buy then stimulates jobs in the corner store, in the grocery store, in the transportation industry, in the agrifood industry and in farming. But the guy who gets \$15,000 as a tax break and makes \$250,000 is not going to spend it all. He's already got \$250,000 to spend. He ain't going to spend all of it. He's going to save some of it; he's going to spend it elsewhere; he's going to do whatever he wants with it. If you really want to stimulate jobs in this province, you give the person at the bottom end more dollars, because they'll spend it and they'll stimulate jobs.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** That's the way it's set up; always has been.

**Mr Wildman:** The member from Brampton says that's the way it's set up. My question is quite simple: Why not change the way it's set up?

We didn't give this kind of tax break. This Bill 129 proposed by this government is a tax break, as the title says, "to stimulate job growth." If you're going to stimulate job growth, you give the money to the people who need it, who are going to spend it, not to the people who don't need it and aren't going to spend it, or aren't going to spend it here to stimulate job growth, if that's what you're serious about.

Unless we can get a real explanation from the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, I'm going to have to suggest that we move an amendment in committee to change the title of this bill. It's not going to stimulate job growth in Ontario.

**Mr Colle:** Show us the studies.

**Mr Wildman:** My friend from Oakwood asks for the studies the government has done that will show I'm wrong and she's right. Can you please table them in committee, the studies that will show that by giving somebody who makes \$250,000 a year \$15,000, you're going to stimulate more jobs than if you gave the person who makes \$25,000 or \$60,000 a few more dollars in their pockets?

Let's not just talk about the people at \$25,000. Let's talk about middle-income people making between \$53,000 and \$67,000. Those people are getting \$1,675; that's one tenth of what the people who are over \$250,000 get. Why? This is a denial of the whole purpose of your bill. If we're going to pass this legislation here, if the committee is going to say, "Yes, we agree with this bill without amendment," we'd better have the figures that demonstrate and the studies that prove this is going to stimulate job growth.

**The Chair:** Does the member for St Andrew-St Patrick wish to respond? Okay, the Chair recognizes the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** I thank the member opposite, the parliamentary assistant for finance. I would like to pursue the same line of questioning. We've already established that a family of four, with an annual income of \$23,000, will benefit to the tune of \$250 per year; an income of \$147,000 to \$172,000 will get \$5,815; an income of \$257,000 per year, a family of four, more than a quarter of a million, will get approximately 30 times what people with a small salary do: \$15,075.

On the same progression, will you kindly inform us, if a person makes a million dollars per year, \$500,000 and then \$1 million — we would like to compare. We will do the mathematics ourselves; we're here to help.

If a person makes between \$53,000 and \$67,000 and gets \$1,675 per year savings, and the person making \$247,000 gets approximately 10 times more money in their pocket by virtue of the decision you have made, yet they only make about 4.5 to five times the money, if this is true and it appears that it is, when a person makes \$1 million a year or \$500,000, these figures will take on unprecedented and extraordinary proportions. They should be, if they are not, embarrassing to the government. What is being done here, if it is true — and the words are not too strong — is a deliberate and systematic benefit to those who need it least at the expense of the middle-class and the working poor in our society. It will go beyond the obscene; it would be porcine. People should ask, if



they were outside this Legislative Assembly, for nothing short of examination and a jail term, because this is an act of thievery.

1650

People go in excess of tens of thousands of dollars as we go through. If you're on the dole or you make a small salary of \$25,000 for a family of four, they throw you the crumbs: \$450 per year. Whoop-de-doo, big deal. But those who are the most fortunate — I guess the more you make, the more you take. Who's on the take here? You can't blame the people who lobby — well, just a bit maybe — but the people who give, and they rake in from all in society.

Not only that, you don't have the money. You've got a big debt out there that you always complain was left to you by the Liberals and the NDP and you use the same plastic, the same credit card, and run it through the machine one more time. You borrow all over the world because you can't even pay your deficit, never mind the debt, so you go out and borrow some more. You're out of control, because the money must come in. You pick the pockets around you, you borrow internationally, and then you take that money and you give it to the Bridle Path.

Madam, one question, and then I shall leave you alone until the next article. If you make \$500,000 per year, a family of four, what are the savings in dollars? If you make \$1 million per year, a family of four, how much do you save? It's the same formula. We started at \$23,000, a family of four; you will save \$450 per year. If you make \$240,000 or so, you will save 30 times that, \$15,075. We need only two more. Don't tell us about Frank Stronach, at \$30-some-odd million or the \$4 million or \$5 million. We want to know \$500,000 and \$1 million.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** The Chair recognizes the member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I prefer to give my time to someone else.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Whichever: Yorkview.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Mr Chair, I'll take anything I can get, especially nowadays.

I was just reminiscing about all the various documents. I welcome the opportunity to debate Bill 129, which is practically the budget itself. I couldn't help but go through my desk here and see that I have been keeping bits and pieces as we have moved along in the last couple of years since the government has taken power. I have to say that since the government took power, they have brought forward a number of documents, including the last budget that we saw this year.

By the way, the last budget addressed itself mainly to such major points as cutting taxes again, and I'll come back to that; balancing the budget, and I will come back to that as well; helping small business to create jobs, which is something I really want to address for the member on the government side; and investing, for example, in excellence in the classroom and stuff like that; investing in children and families; investing in young people; supporting safe communities; and less government, of course. Those are some of the highlights of the last budget. Everything has got to do with dollars

and cents, of course, but above all, it's got to do with good administration, good government.

Some of the previous speakers were addressing the real cost of the tax cut and all the downloading of the Mike Harris government. As I said at the beginning, most of the major documents brought down by the government in the last couple of years included the last budget; the Common Sense Revolution, which now we all know; the 1995 speech from the throne; Bill 26 in November, 1995; the fiscal and economic statement of November 29; of course the budget of May 7, 1996; and a business plan, which meant doing better for less.

Let me read something for the information of the House which I think is quite interesting. It doesn't come from members of the opposition and it doesn't come from a document from the government side; it stems from the budget. I'm going to read a couple of phrases as reported in an article in the Toronto Sun on October 15, 1996. It addresses pages 1 and 2 of the Common Sense Revolution, addressed to the voters. It's in the form of a letter sent by Mike Harris on May 3, 1994, which was a year before the election.

It begins: "The people of Ontario have a message for their politicians — government isn't working any more. The system is broken."

Of course, Mike Harris was elected and he was supposed to fix it. Just over two years later, we know what he has done to that particular system which he said one year prior to the election was broken. This doesn't come from me, it doesn't come from us, it doesn't come from the opposition side. This is the Toronto Sun on October 15, 1996, page 12, and the writer says this:

"Just what did you think Mike Harris was talking about when he made those promises, those comments? To be sure, there are many valid criticisms one can level against the Harris government, but they are based on things the Tories did say they would do. They did say on page 3," I would assume of the Common Sense Revolution, "that they would protect health care funding, spending on classroom education and the priority area of law enforcement.

"Well, even supporters like me are having a hard time understanding exactly what all of that means right now. For example, when the Tories promised they would not touch a penny of health care funding, surely they knew the public would take that as an indication that they were not planning a major upheaval such as the mass closing of hospitals."

The same thing is for education. Now we know, when the Premier said the system was broken and he was getting a message, what he has done two years later. He has been closing hospitals, and we won't see the consequences of that for another couple of years. We know what he's doing to the health care system, to the education system, to labour laws and stuff like that. Let me point out one thing: The income gap is a storm on the horizon, and this springs from the actions of the government.

Many years had been spent to try and bring some equity in the workplace, in the workforce, especially among women working in the many fields of employment and especially the low-paying jobs. Whatever gains had



been made over the last 15 or 20 years have been wiped out in the last 18 months or two years by the Mike Harris government.

1700

What is stranger — it's not even strange, it's ironic — is what they are doing, they are doing with such an arrogance that they keep on saying, "We have been listening to the people and we are continuing to listen to the people," when in fact they are doing the total, complete opposite. If they were listening to the people, they would not do what they are doing today.

On pages 5 and 6 — I have to read this because it's extremely important, because it deals with budget, it deals with spending money, it deals with getting money from the people, it deals with balancing the books, balancing the budget, reducing the debt. Rightly so, I think many of the things the government has said, we have been saying. Yes, we have to be concerned with the rising costs with the budget, the total debt, but we did say there is a way to do things.

What's really hurting — and I will be reminding the Premier and the minister and the members on the government side of this — is that page 5 of the Common Sense Revolution says this: "There is only one taxpayer.... We will work closely with municipalities to ensure that any actions we take will not result in increases to local property taxes." We know what this is going to do to local municipalities and local taxpayers with respect to the unloading.

On page 6 — again, this is something the government will be reminded of on a continual basis, especially how it affects the most needy in our society, the most affected in our society; I'm speaking about seniors. This is something that members on the government side should continually open, on page 6 of the Common Sense Revolution, and continue reading and bring to the attention of their caucus and the Premier on a daily basis:

"'Fair Share' Health Care" — this is on the top of page 6: "We will ask for one thing...to reinvest some of the income tax savings into our health care system." My goodness, we know what they have done with that. "A 'Fair Share' health care levy will be collected through the provincial income tax, with the rich paying more than the middle class" — sounds good, doesn't it? — "and people making less than \$50,000 a year paying nothing. At \$50,000 the levy will be \$100."

Shall I remind the members of the government side, the Premier and the various ministers, who those people below \$50,000 are and how they are being affected?

"The average middle-class family will still save more than \$4,000 over three years." Let me give the government members what this does to a family at some \$40,000 a year. Let's take even a family at \$50,000 a year. A reduction of 15% would give that family of four — that is, a family with two working people and two family members — a reduction of about \$512.

Up to now, what the Mike Harris government has given this particular family is \$30 in new recreational taxes or user fees; new garbage fees, \$50; new water fees, \$100; property taxes, at least \$30; school board taxes, another \$30; transit pass for one student to the tune of \$264; three adult transit passes, another \$180; an

increase for one university student's tuition, \$490. They are saving \$512; Mr Harris has imposed \$662. I wonder where the savings are, to whom Mike Harris is giving that 30% tax cut, because a family making \$50,000, let alone \$40,000, doesn't see any money whatsoever.

Let me go back for a second to one particular group that is extremely affected by the actions of this government. One of these days we're going to come back and remind Mr Harris and the government that he has made a written promise that he wouldn't touch anything to anyone making \$50,000 or less. You know what has happened to people making \$50,000 or less, let alone \$40,000 or \$30,000? He has affected the people making the least: seniors, making some measly \$14,000 a year, \$16,000, and \$24,000. I wonder where Mike Harris got these figures when he was running for election a couple of years ago. I wonder how many seniors — there aren't too many in my area, I can tell you that — are making \$40,000 a year in pension. Perhaps Mike Harris would like to provide me a list for the people in my area of those seniors making \$40,000 a year. I don't think he would find very many in my area.

The irony is that the uncompassionate Mike Harris, the arrogant Mike Harris, is taking the most from the people making the least. That is a shame, because he's charging seniors on a measly pension of \$16,000 a year \$2 every time they have to go to the pharmacy, and now what's happening for those seniors who have to take two, three and four is they are going to the pharmacy and saying: "I can't afford to buy all four or five of them. Which is the most important? That's all I can afford."

I wish I had brought down the letter with me which says, "I have to take my medication every other day because I can't afford to take it on a daily basis." Mr Harris says: "I won't touch you. I will help you. I'm going to bring in the fairest health care system in the province." Now he's taking the most away from the most needy people.

A family or a senior couple making \$24,000 a year already have to shell out \$200 before anything else, plus the \$6.11, plus all the other increases as a result of the actions of this particular government. You cannot see them, but they are there. Seniors and people in general will have to pay, because now they are coming from another level of government, downloaded on the other government by big daddy, Mr Mike Harris. So now those people on fixed incomes — single parents, single women, seniors mostly — they have no other incomes, but they are going to get a tax increase.

Every time now the municipality says, "We have to provide that particular service," so there is a new user fee and they have to pay. There is the increase in electricity or water rates or garbage pickup or the parks and recreation department. If you want to use a community centre, practically nowadays before you step into that community centre, which was built with taxpayers' money, you have to pay \$2 or whatever the municipality is going to come up with.

Is this the intent of the government? Of course, Mr Goldstein was right a couple of years ago when he wrote this one saying: "Yes, Mike Harris said that." Is he saying now that he didn't mean it when he made this



promise, that he lied to the people? Is this what he's implying? No wonder people are saying, "Absolutely." This doesn't come from us, it doesn't come from the opposition, it comes from a very conservative newspaper about a year and a half or two years ago. If Mike Harris made that promise at the time, as some others, he should keep it.

Very often we hear government members goaded when they say, "We have been elected to do exactly that." Well, hold on a second here. When members on this side of the House rise, we get automatically criticized as, "You are attacking the government." What's fair is fair. You are saying that you've been elected and you're doing what you are supposed to do. We happen to be on the opposition side, and it's our job to attack the government, to criticize the government every time you do something wrong. Of course you don't like it, because up to now, there has been very little that this government has done right.

Mr Chair, I have no idea how much time I am allowed to speak.

1710

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Now that you have given me this opening, there isn't a limitation, but we are discussing Bill 129 and it has 11 parts. I guess I should know the length of your question or comment.

**Mr Sergio:** I haven't even touched the first page yet. I know I should give a chance to other members. It's an important document and everyone, I'm sure, wants to have their input on Bill 129.

Sometimes the opposition members get criticized for, not attacking the government, but bringing to the attention of the government those things that are blatantly wrong. It's not only coming from us; we hear it from the public that elected us.

When we go into our community, especially during the days we reserve for constituency work, from morning until night we have people coming, especially young people just coming out of college or university, saying: "I can't find a job. I need a job."

We have people on welfare. We have people living in government-assisted housing, and they are saying: "I know what goes on in there, but I can't move. I can't talk; I can't speak; I can't complain. If I complain about what I see in the building, they're going to kick me out, and now, with rent control being pushed out of the way, I just can't afford another location. If I complain about what I see out of my window, the prostitution taking place in the hallways, the drug trading that happens in the parking lot, they're going to be threatening me to leave the building." This is indeed what we are doing to our people.

The government has the right to bring in a budget, but it's got to be something that is fair, is good and is going to be better for the people they represent.

I don't think we should be listening to the government members when they say, "We've been elected by 38% of the voters."

**Mr Baird :** It's 50%.

**Mr Sergio:** Even 50%, I hear from one of the members. Are they saying they have forgotten about the other 50%? Is this what they are saying? If this is what they

are saying, they should not resent it when members of the opposition get up in this House and speak up for the other 50% who cannot speak for themselves. That is plain and simple.

As much as I desire to continue, I want to give a chance to other members to address Bill 129, to address the House. I hope the government will really come to their senses, will use any common sense they have left and really think about the 50% out there who cannot speak for themselves, from kids to single parents, handicapped people and seniors who will be extremely affected by this so-called fair budget the government has brought down.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Questions or comments? The Chair recognizes the member for —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Fort York.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm glad you remember, Mr Chair. I thought the only time you remember me is when you want to name me, but that's not true. I'm glad.

I've got something to say on this matter. This income tax cut is something that troubles me and troubles a lot of people. That's why we raise the issue, how much are those people earning in the area of \$20,000, \$25,000, \$30,000 going to get back? That's why we repeatedly ask that question, because we know it's very little.

I want to refer the parliamentary assistant to what economist Arthur Donner said in response to a question with respect to issues of tax cuts. "I would say that, to some degree, all government instruments are blunt instruments, but I believe the tax cutting solutions being proposed and implemented today are basically ideologically driven." He goes on to say this: "They are not really designed to create jobs" — that's an important point; I think it's quite clear — "although they are sold that way to the public," which is what you're doing, member for St Andrew-St Patrick, parliamentary assistant. You're selling to the public that this will create jobs. Arthur Donner, an economist, says it's an ideological tool really not designed to create jobs, although there's a need for you and for all your friends over there to say, "This will create jobs, and the plan is working." But it's not working at all. It's not going anywhere because it wasn't really intended to go anywhere.

He says more, and I refer you to his comments because I think they're insightful. "The tax cuts are ultimately for the purpose of eroding the role of government and the expectations people have of government." That too is very instructive. I see that as being a very clear design of your government: to erode the functions of government. It's part of that strategy, but it isn't really about creating jobs because it doesn't create jobs. You have no evidence for that. Neither you, PA, nor your Premier nor the finance minister have any evidence to show that tax cuts create jobs.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Do they have studies? Where are the studies?

**Mr Marchese:** They may be coming, I'm sure. After they pass the bill, for sure.

**Mr Wildman:** No, before.

**Mr Marchese:** Before. I want to see them. I'm sure the PA is getting advice from the ministry people, because they're very knowledgeable types. We're getting



objective opinions about this, no doubt, but clearly there must be contradictory views about what these people think, because this one has clear views about the fact that they do not create jobs.

He goes on to say this: "From what I've been reading in the papers lately, many ordinary citizens are not sure they really want a tax cut if the tradeoff is that their son or daughter will not be able to afford university, or the local hospital will close, or their aging parent will have to travel farther in an emergency." That's a fact.

People are saying, "I wouldn't mind getting money back," even though they don't know they would get much money back, "but if the tradeoff is that I get very little back but I lose a great deal of the services this government has to provide, that we deserve, then no, we don't want it." Many people are saying, "Don't do this tax cut, because we know there is evidence of an erosion of our social infrastructures." They know that. When they go to hospitals, they know the services have declined.

**Mr Wildman:** Except for people at the top.

**Mr Marchese:** Oh, please don't talk about the people at the top. You know who they're going to help? The bankers. They're going to help the bankers who earn about \$1.5 million, \$1.7 million. At the end of that 30% cut, they're going to make 120,000 bucks, more or less; I could be wrong about the number, but that's what I've heard. These are the people who are going to gain. That's why the member for Lake Nipigon was saying earlier that we're creating a society of haves and have-nots and that you people are quite happy creating that gap, because you're on the side of those who have a great deal versus those who don't.

1720

That's why you're clobbering injured workers. My friend the member for Hamilton Centre has talked about that a great deal. You're whacking injured workers, at whose expense? You eliminated the wage protection fund that supported workers when the company goes down. Workers would have been at the front of the line, but under your proposal, by eliminating the wage protection fund, the bankers are at the front of the line and the workers are no longer there; they get nothing.

Shelter homes are overcrowded, but these people, these guys over here, can afford to borrow \$25 billion to finance this tax cut on the basis that it's going to create jobs. Arthur Donner doesn't agree with you. It's not me disagreeing with you. You can dismiss me because you can say: "He was just a teacher. What would he know about economics?" But this is an economics professor, an economic type, an economist, who I think knows a little more than I do, and he says you people are wrong, it's ideologically driven and it doesn't create jobs. Surely you've got to listen to him. I think you should listen to him.

**Mr Pouliot:** Not if you're at the trough.

**Mr Marchese:** But if you're at the trough, it's true, it doesn't really much matter.

He goes on to say, "I would target middle- and lower-income people," if you're going to give a tax cut. "Studies show that these groups of people are saving at record low levels, about 3%, and would tend to spend any extra income." Their spending would create jobs.

But you people really aren't doing that, because two thirds of this \$25 billion you're giving away is going to the top 10%, the people who have money. Isn't that obscene to you? Doesn't it touch you a little bit? Doesn't that give a little murmur of the heart as to the wrongheadedness of that? Is there a heart? Does that heart feel it when you say, "Gee, 60% of this \$25 billion goes to the top 10%"? Don't you feel that a little? I would. Even if I were there, I would feel guilty a little bit.

But I know that the people watching today know which side you people are on. The people watching this program are not Conrad Black, I can tell you that. He doesn't watch this program. The people who watch this program are ordinary folks, mainly seniors, who make, what, \$10,000 a year, like my mom, maybe \$15,000. Maybe some people make \$20,000, I don't know. If you got a little more because you inherited some money or you had a great job, maybe you've got a little more. But most seniors, we know by the studies, are poor people.

You've got injured workers who are at home because they got injured on the job, due to no fault of their own; just ordinary people earning very little. These are the people watching, and they know which side you are on. People are beginning to understand that you are creating a society of those who have money and those who do not. You are redistributing the wealth once again from those who have little and giving more to those who already don't need your help. They don't really need your help. Why would you guys over there help those who don't need any help at the same time you whack those who have so little in life?

My question to the parliamentary assistant, the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, is, what is your sense of what this economist is saying? Ideologically driven: You've got to hammer home that it's going to create jobs, but he says it really isn't designed for that.

If you're going to do the income tax cut, he says, give it to those people at the lower end. I think that makes sense. If you're going to give a tax cut, give it to those at the lower end, those who earn less than I would say \$40,000, but even \$50,000 if you want, because they would benefit and they would spend. Don't give it away to the rich people, Isabel. Don't give it away to them. Give it to those at the bottom. What do you think of the views of this economist? This is a question I have of her.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** The Chair recognizes the member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Mr Gerretsen:** I have two very specific questions to the parliamentary assistant. I've been interested in finding an answer to this question. I've asked it rhetorically here in the House on a number of occasions and no one has answered the question yet. It doesn't deal with part I, which is the tax cut situation. We've heard an awful lot about that in the last little while. It deals with part II, the Land Transfer Tax Act. I noticed there was a statement in the budget as well.

I just want to know whether it's the government's policy that the policy which has been in place since 1974, which is basically to protect our farm land, our agricultural land, our vacant land, our recreational properties etc — there was a major concern some 25 years ago that



a lot of these properties were being bought up mainly by Americans, particularly in the area where I live but I'm sure in many places in Ontario that are close to the American border. It was decided then by an enlightened Conservative government, rather than the Reform government we have now, to impose a 20% land transfer tax on Americans buying these kinds of properties.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** How many people collected it?

**Mr Gerretsen:** I will tell you something, Minister. I was in private practice at that time as a lawyer, and I can tell you that up until that time there was a fair number of Americans who bought recreational properties on an ongoing basis. In 1974, with the implementation of this act, it stopped it — not entirely. Some Americans were prepared to spend the extra 20% in buying these cottage properties.

I want to know, is it now the government's policy that we are no longer concerned about who buys our recreational land, our farm lands, the vacant land out there? I would like to know that, because there was a statement in the budget that says effective May 6, 1997, the land transfer tax will be amended. The reason given is that non-residents of Canada will now pay a land transfer tax on the purchase of all land at the same rate as residents. It says the tax premium on foreign investments is no longer needed.

I wonder if the parliamentary assistant would file with the Clerk's office and lay on the table the studies that is based on. Is it the philosophy of the Reform party we have in power right now not to be concerned about foreign ownership? That's one question.

The other question, and I've been making this comment on a consistent basis for about the last two years, deals with the whole notion of a tax cut. I've been saying, as has the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, that basically the tax cut money is being obtained from borrowed moneys. Of course the government has been in total denial of that. I find it very interesting — and again the parliamentary assistant could address this — that in part I of this act we are talking about the tax cut, but in part XI of the act, which is the Ontario Loan Act, it states: "The bill enacts the Ontario Loan Act, 1997.... The act authorizes the borrowing of up to \$7.5 billion, in total, for the consolidated revenue fund. It is expected that the public capital markets, the international loan market and the Canada pension plan will be the principal sources of funds."

Then it talks about schedule A. In schedule A it specifically states that these moneys can be borrowed "to discharge any indebtedness or obligation of Ontario, to make any payment authorized or required" by the act.

What this bill has shown to me better than anything else, parliamentary assistant, is that you are actually borrowing the money for the tax cut. It states so specifically in part XI, that you want to borrow up to \$7.5 billion so you can pay for the tax cut you're authorizing in part I of the act. Will you now admit categorically that what we've been saying is correct and that basically you want to pay for the tax cut of \$5 billion once it's fully implemented, on an annual basis, by borrowing that

money? You're borrowing \$7.5 billion in the same document.

I would like some answers to those two questions. They are asked in all sincerity and honesty. Would you please now admit that you have to borrow money to pay for your tax cut? This document indicates it. We all know that in your budget document the public debt of the province will go up from \$100 billion to \$120 billion over the next five years. I guess of the extra \$20 billion, you're trying to finance \$7.5 billion of that in part XI of this act.

1730

Come clean with the people of Ontario and say, "Yes, we want particularly the people who are better off in this society to have a tax cut, and the way we're going to fund it is by borrowing the money." Why else would you in the same bill have a tax cut provision as well as a borrowing provision? It makes absolutely no sense at all unless what I'm saying is correct, that you're borrowing this money to pay for your tax cut.

From a party that likes to indicate to the people of Ontario that it represents business interests in Ontario, it's certainly not running the financial affairs of the government in a very businesslike manner. I know of no other organization that runs on an annual deficit of \$6 billion to \$7 billion per year that at the same time would be borrowing money so that the people who are better off can get a tax cut. I'd be very interested in getting the answer to those questions, Madam Parliamentary Assistant.

**Mr Kormos:** I have a very specific question to put to the parliamentary assistant as well, and that is in the context of the history of this government since their election in 1995. I recall very specifically that one of the first things this government did in short order was to chop the assistance given to our poorest people, unemployed people, by 21.6%.

*Interjections.*

**The Second Deputy Chair:** I can't have these conversations back and forth.

**Mr Kormos:** What I find remarkable, and I wish the parliamentary assistant would respond to this in the context of the bill she is sponsoring here today, is that one of the first acts of this government was to reduce social assistance benefits to our poorest by 21.6%, followed in short order by a salary increase for MPPs to the tune of at least 10%.

**Mr Pouliot:** Point of order, Mr Chair: Does a quorum call apply to committee of the whole House?

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Is a quorum present?

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** A quorum is present, Chair.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** The member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Kormos:** What surprised me was a full-page advertisement that I read in last Saturday's edition of the St Catharines Standard, in which a Tory backbencher, among other things, in this full-page ad spoke of there having been a reduction of MPPs' salaries by 5%. That simply didn't compute. This Tory backbencher, in a full-page ad in the St Catharines Standard — it could well have been a typographical error, because we all know the



government increased their salaries by at least 10% promptly after cutting the support for social assistance recipients by 21.6%.

Let's look at the numbers. The pre-Tory salary for MPPs was \$42,000 a year taxable, plus \$14,000 a year tax-free. If you want to compound that \$14,000 a year to make it the equivalent of a taxable income, let's do it by 100%. That comes to \$28,000, and \$28,000 plus \$42,000 comes to \$70,000. So the pre-Tory salary was the equivalent of approximately \$70,000 taxable. The post-Tory salary is a base of \$78,004. At least one Tory backbencher spent a whole lot of money placing a full-page ad in the St Catharines Standard trying to tell the public of Ontario that increasing the wage from \$70,000 to \$78,000 constituted a 5% reduction in pay. As I said, there could well have been a typographical error.

Interestingly, some Tory backbenchers would try to indicate that adjusts yet more so for the \$100-a-day, tax-free per diem that these guys were gobbling up during the course of lengthy, let's say, Bill 26 hearings, achieved only by virtue of the conduct of Alvin Curling, a Liberal caucus member who forced public hearings by virtue of a strategic stunt here in the House, and were it not for that, there certainly wouldn't have been those extensive Bill 26 hearings.

A Tory backbencher suggests, as well, that extra \$8,000 is necessary to compensate the Tories for what they lost in the tax-free per diems. At \$100 a day tax-free — mind you, they didn't have to take the tax-free per diems; it wasn't compulsory to fill out the form, but they did — when you calculate that to add up to \$8,000, Parliamentary Assistant, you're talking about over 60 days, indeed over 70 days, indeed 80 days a year, which at four days at a week, 16 weeks per month, is the equivalent of five full months of sitting on committee when the House isn't sitting. It's never calculated out to constitute 80 days of per diems. Even if the Tories want to somehow justify replacing pure cash grabs by that extra \$8,000, what we're left with is a 10% salary increase for MPPs in such short order after cutting off our poorest at the knees.

What's interesting about the salary increase for MPPs is that perhaps only six or seven of the whole Tory caucus collect only their base salary of \$78,004. There's only a handful of Tory caucus members who collect that enhanced salary of \$78,000. The new Mike Harris Tory regime that wants to beat the daylighters out of the poorest in our society raises their salaries from what in effect was \$70,000 to \$78,000, but then only six or seven or eight at the most of all the Tories here at Queen's Park don't collect perks, let's put it, cash, payola, in addition to that \$78,004 base salary. It ranges from the mere \$4,500 for a Vice-Chair to the \$8,000-plus for a Chair to the \$11,000 or \$12,000 for a parliamentary assistant, and to — what the heck is it? Some cabinet ministers work very hard. They have very long days and a great deal of responsibility.

1740

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** What are the qualifications for a parliamentary assistant?

**Mr Kormos:** What are the qualifications for a parliamentary assistant? I've got my speaking notes in here.

The qualifications for a parliamentary assistant: I know what the member for — he's right here with us today. I suspect that if the member for Grey-Owen Sound didn't say this, this is his sterling opportunity to stand up and deny it.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** I didn't say it, but Bill Murdoch, the member for Grey-Owen Sound, who was a good parliamentary assistant — darn, he was a good parliamentary assistant. He was among the most dutiful. He was. I know folks from up in his riding. The member for Grey-Owen Sound is popular in his riding. On Sunday in Welland at the Rose Festival parade, a fellow from one of the pipe and drum bands that was down came over and introduced himself, said: "Good to see you. I'm from up in Grey-Owen Sound. I'm one of Bill Murdoch's constituents. I want to tell you, even though Bill Murdoch was probably the best parliamentary assistant any government has ever seen, one of the best" — that was a very parochial comment; it was one of his constituents.

We've got to get back because the member for St Catharines, who read the same full page — what is the cost of a full-page ad in the St Catharines Standard? Maybe, if you're with the Tory government, Tubby Black gives you a little break. Is it possible? You're in his back pocket. At the end of the day, you're in his back pocket.

**Mr Bradley:** Conrad likes the Tories.

**Mr Kormos:** His name is Conrad, but it's Tubby, as we affectionately call him: Tubby, he who gobbles up small-town newspapers and spits out the editorial staff, leaving them unemployed, looking for jobs. The member for Grey-Owen Sound is the subject matter of some prolonged discussion here.

Chair, I put this to the parliamentary assistant: The full-page ad may well have been a typographical error when it talked about the Conservative government reducing MPPs' salaries by 5%. If it wasn't a typographical error and it wasn't the truth, there's an irresistible conclusion. If it wasn't a typographical error — and we know there was no 5% decrease in salaries; there was a 10% increase in salaries for MPPs as a result of the Tories.

I suppose the money this government saved by cutting the allowances of the poorest people in this society, by cutting social assistance rates 21.6%, helped pay for the 10% salary increase for MPPs. I suppose having taken food off the table and taken food and clothing away from the kids of these families helped pay for the MPPs' salary increases.

I suppose that laying off, terminating the jobs of almost 300 workers in the family support plan and shutting down eight regional offices — Ms Martel knows what I mean; she saw it with her own eyes. She filmed it; she videotaped it.

I suppose that shutting down eight regional offices of the family support plan and terminating almost 300 staff and leaving thousands of women and kids hungry, increasingly destitute in the fall of 1996, just before Christmas, without Christmases, women and their kids getting eviction notices, having the sheriff come knocking on the door, knock, knock, knocking with the writ of possession, in the fall of 1996 through into the winter and



Christmas season, having utilities terminated, cut off because they couldn't pay them because the money this government saved by shutting down the family support plan denied these women and kids those support payments that their spouses — not always spouses, but the supporting parent — were paying into the family support plan. Almost inevitably that was the case. As often as not — they weren't all fathers, they weren't all dads, because some were mothers paying support — they were as upset as anybody else because they had already had these moneys deducted from their paycheques. Some actually scraped to try to find more, but there simply was no more, to help make sure their kids didn't go cold, didn't go without food, didn't go without clothes, literally.

If any of you people think that this is somehow an exaggeration, please, there are videotapes as well of many of the women and kids we met with. We came to this Legislature with the eviction notices, with the termination notices from Bell Canada and from Provincial Gas and from Ontario Hydro and from local water departments.

This wasn't a mere inconvenience. This wasn't merely having to call up the bank to say, "Look, let my overdraft carry me for a couple more days; I know the cheque is going to be here." We met with and talked to those women and kids whose support payments — of what amounted at the end of the day to millions of dollars, I'm sure, over the course of that period of time — whose support payments, being paid 100 bucks a shot, 200, 300 bucks at a time, didn't get to the people they were intended to because this government wanted to increase MPPs' salaries and wanted to provide a tax break for the very richest. Two thirds of all of that tax break goes to the top 10% of income earners, a tax break that, oh boy, is real attractive if you're making 150 grand to 172 grand a year. Man, oh, man, that's a tax break, if you're up there making six-digit incomes, not just modest six-digit incomes, upscale six-digit incomes.

This government has already taken from the poorest in our society, taken from the weakest, the most vulnerable, took from those women and kids who relied on the family support plan. That's where it got the money. That's where it got the six grand a year that it's going to pay back to the \$150,000-to-\$172,000 income earners. It didn't come out of thin air.

This government let kids go without Christmas in December 1996 so it could give a \$6,000 tax break to somebody making 150 to 172 grand a year, the little kids we spoke to from all over Ontario. Not a part of this province was immune from the devastation this government imposed upon the family support plan and upon the kids and their mothers who relied on it. Not a single part of this province was immune from this government's attack on those women and kids.

We talked to those women and kids. We talked to the kids — little ones, teenagers. We heard them tell us what it was like to not only have no gifts under the tree but not to have a tree either. Think about it for a minute, please. Think about what it must be like for a six-, seven-, eight-year-old kid to try to understand what it means when the sheriff comes knocking at your door with a writ of possession and when your clothes and the

knick-knacks and the stuffed toys are all thrown into the green garbage bags along with the groceries and the onions from the crisper in the fridge and tossed out. That's how it happens. I'm sorry; it's not an orderly process.

You don't have King Movers pulling up with shipping crates. You don't have half a dozen uniformed livery people packing your items and putting bubble-wrap around them so they don't break while they're being carted away. I wish — well, I don't wish that on anybody, but I regret that it's clear that our government counterparts haven't witnessed the indignity of that type of process.

The sheriff comes knocking with the writ of possession, and what possessions you have are unceremoniously and without any folding or neat packing dumped into green garbage bags. That's how it happens, friends. You tell me, for the life of me, how a six- or seven- or eight-year-old kid is supposed to incorporate that into what's anything akin to a healthy life experience.

Talk to the women who went to food banks for the first time in their lives, and who resisted it, who used up all the goodwill of close friends and then reached out to not-so-close friends until all the capacity of the people around them had been exhausted, who with humiliation called upon retired parents who can ill afford it, who have modest incomes in their own right. This is what happens when women and kids are assaulted the way they were assaulted by the abandonment of the family support plan so that people making \$165,000 a year can get another \$6,000 back on their taxes: women who go to their retired folks and plead with them, and those folks go out and put a second mortgage on a home, consuming whatever little equity they managed to have made. They thought they had some security. That's what happens.

Think about it. The prospect of a family with two or three kids having the cable cut off — well, that's just the cable. You put a coat-hanger in the sockets of the television set. That's what you do. It's one thing to lose your cable; it's another thing to have the telephone shut off, so that you can't communicate beyond your home, so that you don't know whether the school's calling because your kid fell down and broke an arm or broke a leg or got sick in the classroom. It's one thing to lose your cable, but let me tell you, it's a totally different world to lose your telephone. We're talking about young families, young kids. We're talking here about moms, mothers, women who —

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Order. Pursuant to the order of the House dated yesterday, the House is required to conduct a deferred division on the amendment to the motion to amend the standing orders at 5:55. I therefore suspend these proceedings until after the vote.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

Deferred vote on the amendment to the motion for adoption of amendments to the standing orders.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Mr Sampson has moved an amendment to the motion for adoption of amendments to the standing orders. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1755 to 1800.*



**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Grimmett, Bill	O'Toole, John
Bassett, Isabel	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Harnick, Charles	Parker, John L.
Boushy, Dave	Hastings, John	Pettit, Trevor
Brown, Jim	Jackson, Cameron	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Carroll, Jack	Johns, Helen	Ross, Lillian
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Cunningham, Dianne	Johnson, David	Shea, Derwyn
Danford, Harry	Jordan, W. Leo	Smith, Bruce
Doyle, Ed	Kells, Morley	Snobelen, John
Ecker, Janet	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Elliott, Brenda	Leach, Al	Sterling, Norman W.
Eves, Ernie L.	Leadston, Gary L.	Stewart, R. Gary
Fisher, Barbara	Marland, Margaret	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	Martiniuk, Gerry	Vankoughnet, Bill
Froese, Tom	Munro, Julia	Villeneuve, Noble
Galt, Doug	Murdoch, Bill	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan	Wood, Bob

**The Speaker:** All those opposed please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Grandmaître, Bernard	McLeod, Lyn
Boyd, Marion	Gravelle, Michael	Morin, Gilles E.
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Castrilli, Annamarie	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pouliot, Gilles
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Conway, Sean G.	Lankin, Frances	Wildman, Bud
Crozier, Bruce	Laughren, Floyd	Wood, Len
Duncan, Dwight	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 54; the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion passed.

*Report continues in volume B.*

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller  
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC) Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b> (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Corwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamaria (L)	Mississauga North / -Nord	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b> (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Nickel Belt	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Oriole	Vacant
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)	Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Oxford	Hardeman, Emie (PC)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)		



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Vacant
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Tumbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford,  
Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk,  
David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross,  
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Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist,  
Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro,  
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Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo,  
R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona  
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Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson,  
Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin,  
Sandra Pupatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

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Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole,  
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Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona  
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**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson,  
Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen,  
Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy,  
Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea,  
Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet  
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Jerry J. Ouellette  
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh,  
Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott,  
Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan,  
Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Joseph Spina  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan  
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli,  
Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees,  
Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro,  
Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten,  
Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum



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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 24 June 1997

Mardi 24 juin 1997

Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers



Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 juin 1997

*Report continued from volume A.*

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*House in committee of the whole.*

## JOB GROWTH AND TAX REDUCTION ACT, 1997

### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CROISSANCE DE L'EMPLOI ET LA RÉDUCTION DES IMPÔTS

Continuing consideration of Bill 129, An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget / Projet de loi 129, Loi visant à stimuler la croissance de l'emploi, à réduire les impôts et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1997.

**The Chair (Mr Gilles E. Morin)** We will resume clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 129, section 1. Mr Kormos.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Chair, I was putting a question to the parliamentary assistant. The interruption was unavoidable because it was a vote that had been deferred from yesterday.

**The Chair:** I can hardly hear you, sir.

**Mr Kormos:** It's because people are talking all around me, Chair, and they're creating a din.

We understand that there's a tax break. In the broadest terms the issues are, for whom, to what end and at what cost? We know, as a result of questions put to the parliamentary assistant that, gosh, folks making 170 grand a year, this government's going to kick back \$5,815 to them. Man oh man, if you're up 200 G's a year, you're going to see a tax cut of around 15 grand, \$15,000 for those persons earning \$200,000, \$225,000, indeed up to \$257,000 a year.

I was querying where this money came from and will come from. I presented to the parliamentary assistant our experience in this province with the family support plan and the dismantlement of that plan, no doubt in no small part to help finance this tax break for people making \$150,000, \$160,000, \$200,000, \$257,000 a year.

I have no doubt that the Attorney General was directed to find savings in his ministry. One of the places he found savings was laying off almost 300 staff from the family support plan and shutting down eight regional offices. That's what is helping to finance this so-called tax break. It's a wonderful tax break for the six-digit income earners, for families up in the \$160,000, \$170,000, \$200,000, \$257,000 income bracket.

We know there's a tax break. For whom? That's starting to become clearer and clearer as the parliamentary assistant and her staff, not inappropriately, start to

come up with the numbers; there are more coming. A tax break for whom? We're starting to understand that. Our suggestion for a good chunk of time now that two thirds of all of that tax break is going to the top 10% of income earners is being confirmed by the parliamentary assistant and her staff now.

A tax break for whom and at what cost and then to what end? Now the cost once again: To help finance the tax break the Attorney General is told to find money in the family support plan. You find money by reducing costs, and he reduced costs — no two ways about it — by terminating almost 300 staff and shutting down eight regional offices.

What flowed from that we witnessed. We witnessed the aftermath, and I speak specifically of the member for Sudbury East and myself. I suppose I'm talking about our visit up to Downsview, the old MTO offices up around Keele Street and the 401. We witnessed the disaster in practical terms, in administrative terms that flowed from shutting down eight offices and terminating almost 300 FSP staff.

But as importantly, and I tell you probably more importantly, we talked across this province to the women and their kids who became victims of this government's so-called tax break. I say "so-called" because two thirds of the tax break is going to the top 10% of income earners. If you're making 225 grand a year, by God, you're going to get 15 grand back. What if you're only making \$28,000 a year? Where I come from, that isn't a salary or an income to turn your nose up at. There are a whole lot more working people — the ones who are blessed to be working, because down in Niagara region we've got the highest unemployment in all of Ontario, and an unemployment level that has grown while there's been a general trend across Canada for some modest reduction in unemployment.

The parliamentary assistant understands those figures. She's aware of the national trend, one that the federal government of course took great credit for, although I suppose it was more attributable to international factors and things that take place well beyond the control of any government. Certainly that modest decrease in national unemployment wasn't the result of any tax breaks that the federal government granted anybody; it was a result of international trends. Like my colleague from Fort York, I read what various people write. The low interest rate we're told is in some small part responsible for an increase in new investment. It's cheaper to borrow money; it's as simple as that. It's as cheap as it's been in a whole lot of time.

As I say, \$28,000 a year is nothing to sneeze at where I come from, and I suspect that can be said about a whole lot of Ontario. I visit families — not just me; I'm sure



everybody here — and I've got to tell you it's remarkable to witness a family that can raise two or three kids on \$28,000 a year. Housing costs alone; but then you move on to things like the cost of kids' clothing and the cost of groceries when you've got two or three kids. Folks who are witnessing that or experiencing that know exactly what I mean. But a whole lot of working people in this province make, yes, \$28,000 a year.

That figure is based on what the parliamentary assistant and her very skilled staff tell us. A tax break of 450 bucks a year, that's what the numbers were as I read them; it's slightly less than 10 bucks a week. Let's assume it's 10 bucks a week. Let's gross it up a little bit here. Let's show some generosity for the sake of the argument to the government. Let me tell you, Parliamentary Assistant, 10 bucks a week where I come from doesn't even begin to cover the cost of increased user fees for those same families earning \$28,000 a year with two or three kids, doesn't even begin to cover the new costs being downloaded on to them.

This government's abolition of rent control is going to mean that those families, one way or another — I understand the control that will exist as long as the status quo prevails for a family or persons living in a rental unit. But one way or another, that rent's going to be jacked up. Municipalities — and I know municipalities oh so well, and their councils — and city councils from municipality to municipality, to city, to town across this province want, especially in the year 1997, to be able to proclaim to their constituents that there was a zero tax increase. But what they don't talk about is the increased user fees or the increased sewer surcharges on water bills or the increased water bills. Six of one, half a dozen of the other.

Or like in the city of Welland — again, I don't fault the city council. They've been put under the gun by this government and the downloading. A family friend died a couple of months ago. I was asked to help with some of the funeral arrangements. It was a tragedy. I went down to the funeral home and we were adding up the costs and then they told us about the \$10 licence fee for a funeral. Not the burial plot, not the fee for city workers to come and dig so you can accommodate the concrete chamber that goes into the ground; a \$10 licence fee, a licence to die.

At the end the funeral home was — well, I'll tell you which one it was, Cudney's — very considerate about controlling the costs of the funeral. But the indignation, especially in the context of something like that — albeit it was \$10 and I might say only \$10, I suppose, in contrast to what the real costs of a funeral are. As I say, the funeral home was very careful in terms of controlling the costs, but the indignation of a \$10 dying licence, a new user fee.

The city wasn't particularly proud of it, I'm sure, but cities, municipalities like Welland, Thorold, Pelham, Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Port Colborne, Lincoln, St Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake are having to become increasingly creative when it comes to finding new user fees.

So that \$8 or \$9 a week that your tax break is going to give the vast majority of families — because you,

Parliamentary Assistant, know the scale. I'm doing this off the top of my head. I believe that the top 10% of income earners begins at around \$67,000 a year. That's the last scale I saw and I could be off on that. It's a remarkable observation, but the top 10% of income earners begins at \$67,000.

I don't begrudge somebody \$67,000 a year, understand that. But I'd like to know — I suppose I have several questions, because the parliamentary assistant and her very skilled, hardworking, committed staff came up with some hard numbers — of this group of \$23,000 to \$28,000 a year what percentage of income earners they constitute here in Ontario. I think that's important, because I suspect that we're going to find the biggest bulk, in terms of numbers of people and families, not up there at the top end getting the big bucks from their friends here at Queen's Park, but that the vast majority of Ontarians, like the folks in Welland-Thorold, are struggling along, working hard and doing their best, more likely for wages of \$23,000 to \$28,000, \$35,000, \$40,000, \$45,000 a year.

I think we've got to put this into perspective in terms of the numbers of people who are benefiting, because we know there are a heck of a lot more households making \$28,000 to \$35,000 a year than there are making \$172,000 to \$257,000 a year. There's a whole lot more of them.

One of the issues here is fairness, isn't it? We know there's a tax break. For whom, at what cost and to what end? I've got a feeling that some of those same people making \$23,000 to \$28,000 a year were the women who relied on the family support plan to deliver their support payments — who may well witness a tax break of \$8 or \$9 a week; that's what it comes to. For \$9 a week do you think they gave up the family support plan the way it was taken away from them by this government and its Attorney General? Not in a New York minute.

We were interrupted by that vote and I think I was talking about some of the women and kids that Ms Martel from Sudbury East and I — look, I'm not going to suggest that none of the government members has spoken to these women and their kids. I'm not going to suggest that for a minute, because I know that some of them have. You couldn't have avoided it. Back in the fall of 1997, September or so, our offices here in the New Democratic Party caucus were beginning to be plagued by concerns about the family support plan and its failure to deliver moneys that were being paid into it.

1820

Let's get something very clear: The family support plan wasn't delivering tax moneys. It wasn't delivering taxpayers' dollars. Its duty was to receive support payments that were being paid by absent parents, usually fathers — not always though, because we talked to a whole lot of interesting cases, of course, where moms were paying support — and then deliver it to the moms and their kids. These were moneys to which those moms and kids were legally entitled — not just legally entitled, morally entitled. These weren't wealthy families who could afford to dismiss a couple of hundred bucks now and then as being an oversight and, "Oh well, we'll let that one ride." These were as often as not the very



families we're talking about earning \$23,000 to \$28,000 a year, struggling, counting pennies, making ends meet, and they relied on the family support plan to make sure they got that \$100 a week, \$120 a week, \$50 a week or \$40 a week. That's what made the difference between making it and doing without.

I think I did mention — I don't want to repeat myself unduly — that what heightened the tragedy of all this was that it occurred just before Christmas, and on a daily basis members of this caucus, the New Democratic Party, were putting questions to this government's Attorney General, asking for some explanation as to why so many women and their kids were doing without. We knew that eight offices had been shut down. We knew that almost 300 family support plan staff had been terminated. We suspected that was the reason for the failure to deliver the moneys that were due these women and their kids.

But the Attorney General on a daily basis, day after day, question period after question period, said that each and every one of these cases was an anomaly, that it was a mere glitch isolated from anything else that was happening in the family support plan and that the family support plan, by God, was up and running up there in Downsview, that their high-tech system, their computers, their planning, by God, their restructuring of the family support plan was making it bigger and better and centralized. They were going to do more with less. They were going to deliver those moneys and those cheques without those eight regional offices and without those almost 300 staff.

We asked the question again when other cases came up, as they did on a daily, on an hourly basis in our offices. The Tory members were getting the same queries, receiving the same complaints, and the Attorney General kept on insisting that his plan was smooth sailing. You heard him, Chair, day after day.

What was happening out there across Ontario while this was happening? It's as I told you. I suppose if I had merely heard about it, I would have been disinclined to believe it. I wouldn't have thought that it could be possible that so much heartbreak and devastation could be wreaked upon so many young kids and their moms, until we met those kids and moms. We looked at the eviction notices and the writs of possession, and we looked at the termination notices for utilities: water, gas, hydro. As I say, it's one thing to lose your cable, it's another thing to lose your telephone. We saw the notices from banks where you get the \$10 fee for bouncing a cheque. I know what it's like. I've bounced cheques; I think most of us have. It's one thing that a merchant will inevitably call me up and say, "Look, your cheque didn't clear," and I go, "Oh, my goodness." The fellows down at George's hardware down at the south end of King Street know me and it's no problem: "Pete, next time you're by, drop off another cheque."

But when you're living at \$23,000 to \$28,000 a year, merchants are disinclined to call you to say: "Oh, you bounced a cheque. Don't worry. Come in next time you're by." They're more inclined to call the police to have you charged with an NSF cheque. That's what happens to low-income people who bounce cheques. They get the cops sicced on them and they get charged with

fraud or false pretences. The people who are going to get the 15 grand a year back from this government, the folks making \$172,000 to \$257,000, when they bounce a cheque nobody calls the cops. They say: "Oh, Mr Black, we're sorry to embarrass you, but your cheque bounced. Oh, we're so sorry. Please, next time you're in the neighbourhood, drop off another cheque." But when a single mom's cheque bounces, it's the cops knocking on her door.

**The Chair:** The member for Welland-Thorold, I have listened to you very attentively, I gave you ample time, but in listening to what you're debating, you're not on target at all. We're talking on section 1, and I would just remind you to try to stick to section 1.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On a point of order, Mr Chair: The bill is entitled An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget. Part I deals with an income tax cut which purports to stimulate job growth. I would think that would make it possible for a member to range quite widely in debating this matter, since we are talking about stimulating job growth because of a tax cut. We just want to get information.

**The Chair:** All I'm saying, member for Welland-Thorold, is that you're going a bit too far.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you, Chair. I appreciate that comment. I also appreciate the comment of my friend from Algoma, who has witnessed many bills similar to this but never one like this, I'm sure. I apologize to the Chair, because the Chair will understand that what I was talking about was the tax break, at what cost, for whom and to what end. I appreciate what you're saying and I appreciate the Chair's direction.

I will end my comments with a very specific question; I have asked several of the parliamentary assistant. I was commenting on the incredible cost, because my question to the parliamentary assistant entails, among other things, something I suspected, and that was that the abandonment of the family support plan was part and parcel of paying for the tax break, which is what section 1 speaks of — speaking to what cost, at what cost. We've already started to understand who the tax break is for. It's for the very richest. The low-income family receives a tax break of but nine bucks a week, all of which is consumed by increased user fees, city to city, whether it's one of your little kids who's got to pay a user fee at school — yes, a user fee at school — so she or he can participate in, let's say, track and field or in the drama program or in the science labs. It's true. It's been happening. Or a user fee for these same families as their sewer surcharges are increased as a disguised way of increasing property taxes, because no municipal council in 1997 has wanted to face a municipal election year subject to the inevitable charge that they were responsible for increased taxes.

#### 1830

They were responsible for increased sewer surcharges, increased water rates, decreased garbage collection, increased poundage rates at the local dump, increased fees for kids using swimming pools: not big Olympic swimming pools, but small-town wading pools and small-town swimming pools with a diving board like we've got over at St George's Park. You see, what happens is that



sometimes the pools just get shut down. At what cost these tax breaks? Sometimes the pools just get shut down.

You know what? Something that's incredibly important, you've got to understand — and this isn't unique; there are so many other communities across Ontario that are similar to this — is that in Welland, public swimming pools are very much an element of public safety. You see, we've got a river running through the city and a canal, the old Welland Canal, and it's imperative, I suggest to you, that there be public swimming pools well within the range of affordability where young kids can take swimming lessons, because those kids are going to be lured to that canal and that river in any event. I tell you, swimming pools in a city like Welland are more than a mere luxury for little kids. They are. You're talking about ensuring that every kid has a crack at learning how to swim because you've got a big, deep canal there, a big, deep river, and a lake on either end of the peninsula, be it Ontario or Erie to the south. I know there are a whole lot of other communities in a similar position. Swimming pools aren't some sort of luxury.

I'd like the parliamentary assistant to explain, with the increased user fees being imposed from municipality to municipality, how this \$9 tax break — because don't forget, Parliamentary Assistant, please, I also ask you to tell us what percentage of families are down there in that \$28,000 income bracket. I suspect far more than a lot of the folks in this room. These are the folks in this room, the Tory backbenchers, who gave themselves a 10% salary increase within mere days of slashing social assistance benefits by 21.6%. A 10% salary increase. They jacked their gross salaries up, their base salary. Don't forget, the minimum wage in here is \$78,004 a year. That's the minimum wage in this place, and MPPs gave themselves a net salary increase, on the base alone, of at least \$8,000.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** They did. That's generating some howls of protest. It's remarkable, because one advertisement, a full page that I saw in the St Catharines Standard this Saturday past by an MPP from the government benches, said that we've got a 5% salary decrease. Not. Sorry. That isn't the way it calculated out.

Interestingly, what the government did was bump up MPPs' salaries. The poorest MPP in this place makes \$78,004, and all but a handful of government members make perks in addition to that \$78,004, all but four or five or six. We know some of the ones who don't. We know that Bill Murdoch has been cut back. We know that Gary Carr has been cut back. We know that Tony Skarica — what did he have to say about this government? "It's a dictatorship."

Section 1 of Bill 129 talks about tax breaks, two thirds of which are going to go to the top 10% of income earners. Tax breaks for whom? Parliamentary Assistant? You've started to break down who's going to get these tax breaks. It's becoming clearer and clearer that the wealthier you are, the more you get from this government. Understand that, Chair. The richer you are, the more this government's going to be handing back to you. The poorer you are, the less you get. That's what their

tax break scheme amounts to. The poorer you are, the less you get; the richer you are, the more you get.

It's to create jobs. That's what they've said. We heard from the member for Fort York, who talked about economist after economist who tells you that giving rich people more money doesn't create jobs. It doesn't.

Beating up on kids and their moms by shutting down the family support plan so that you can pay those rich people more in tax breaks doesn't create jobs. It just creates women and kids who are victimized, women and kids who are tossed out of their apartments because the landlord gets an eviction order or writ of possession, women and kids who default on their mortgage because this government's paying for these tax breaks for the very richest. By shutting down programs like the family support plan, it means women defaulting on their mortgage and being ousted out on to the street from a home that they thought was theirs and that once was.

That's where the money's coming from so that somebody making 250 grand a year can get \$15,000 back from this government while some poor working stiff busting his or her butt for 28 grand a year will see if he or she is lucky a mere nine bucks a week, all of which plus will be consumed by new user fees. Is that how you create jobs? Not likely.

Where I come from, the people in Welland-Thorold, the people across Niagara, know it. This doesn't put money back in the pockets of working stiffs. Guys and gals working over at the rubber plant or the guys and gals working over at Exolon in the abrasives factory, swallowing the dirt and the grit and the dust and walking the catwalks around the huge arc furnaces as the boiling metal splashes up on to him — it doesn't put money back into their pockets. It doesn't. They're the ones who are going to get back \$9, \$10, \$11 a week. They're the ones who are going to spend every penny of that plus on the new user fees that flow directly from this government's appropriation. What a polite word for theft: "appropriation." Conversion, I suppose, gets even closer.

This government picks the pockets of working people. It makes them pay so that the six-digit-income earners — look, do any of us begrudge somebody? If somebody's making 100 grand, 150 grand a year, God bless. We understand. I understand in a very direct and personal way. I understand, but I also understand that if you're blessed in this society, in this province, with the opportunity to earn that six-digit income, you've got a responsibility to pay your fair share. I believe that. Do you want to know something, Chair? I think there's a whole lot of people — not all of them, not by any stretch of the imagination — blessed with those types of incomes who agree with me.

**1840**

We'd all like a tax break. We'd all like not to have to pay taxes. I understand that. But surely if we're going to be putting money into the pockets of Ontarians, we had better start putting money into the pockets of the lowest-income Ontarians first. Surely if we're going to be putting money into the pockets of Ontarians, we don't make women and kids suffer as a result of it, like the women and kids suffered when this government shut down the family support plan. And suffer they did, not



merely inconvenienced. And I tell you, it was and remains large numbers. It was thousands of women and kids who paid a huge price as they relied upon the family support plan, women and kids who paid a huge price so this government could give tax breaks to \$225,000- and \$250,000-a-year income earners.

This government talks a big game about — well, let's get around to family values. This government talks family values. After what it did to women and kids and families during its bungling, during its shutdown, during its abandonment of those women and kids, during its shutdown of eight regional offices and layoff of almost 300 staff of the family support plan this government dares talk about family values? Do you know what you did to families? Have you any sense of what you did to families across this province when the Attorney General was instructed to shut down eight regional offices and lay off, terminate, almost 300 staff for the sake of a tax break for the very wealthiest? If you didn't have any idea then, surely you've got some idea now.

I tell you, that doesn't impress the guys outside Stelco right now. It doesn't impress the folks outside Exolon. It doesn't impress the workers at General Motors or Atlas Steels or the folks at the rubber plant or the folks in the paper mills down in Thorold. It doesn't impress them one bit, because they're starting to understand what this tax break really means to their day-to-day lives. It means fewer services, it means new user fees and it means victim after victim after victim.

It means shutting down hospitals like the Port Colborne General and like the Hotel Dieu and their dialysis unit up in St Catharines. I'll tell you what you've got at the Hotel Dieu dialysis unit: You've got people who have to show up and do — I'm talking about the tax break and what it means, what is the real cost of this tax break. I'm talking about folks who show up at Hotel Dieu because their kidneys have broken down. Their kidneys don't work any more. It's a disease that I'm told by the people up in the dialysis unit is becoming more frequent. People show up for dialysis and have to leave before the full course of treatment is effected. So instead of staying the appropriate seven or eight hours, they've got to leave after five, only partly flushed out. I speak in the colloquial about the process. They're only partially flushed out and still somewhat toxic, but they've got to go back to their jobs, back to their homes, because we've got a dialysis unit that's already working beyond capacity.

That's what's going to go when the Hotel Dieu is shut down: that dialysis unit that a whole lot of workers have donated to, that a whole lot of volunteers have contributed to by virtue of their fund-raising time and their own participation and their own labour, and a whole lot of medical staff, committed doctors and nursing staff and nurses' aides and the volunteers who drive people to and from and help the folks in there. You see, hospital shutdowns are part of the cost of the tax break.

Port Colborne General is a hospital that was built brick by brick by working people and small business people and retirees and seniors down in Port Colborne: brick by brick, donation by donation, volunteer hour by volunteer hour and, yes, tax dollar by dollar, so that the families in Port Colborne could have an emergency ward

and an obstetrics ward, so that they wouldn't have to risk the drive from Port Colborne up to Welland, to the Welland County General, in the case of a crisis, in the case of a heart attack.

If you ask those folks in Port Colborne which they prefer more, your tax break or the Port Colborne General Hospital, they won't hesitate a minute. They're going to tell you, "You can keep your" — I almost slipped there for a minute; I almost threw in an adjective — "tax break. Let us keep the hospital we built." That's what people in Port Colborne are saying right now.

You're talking about a tax break two thirds of which is going to go to the top 10% of income earners and for which there is a cost that we're just beginning to understand. Talk to the families, the moms and dads and the grandfolks, about junior kindergarten. I'll tell you, the Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, to their credit, was able to maintain JK. What's going to happen now after amalgamation remains to be seen. I've got to be fair. The amalgamation of boards in Niagara is probably among the neatest — I don't mean that in the colloquial — because it amalgamates the Niagara north and the Niagara south. So at the end of the day, while it still de-democratizes the role of trustees, in geographic terms it is one of the more convenient mergers — in geographic terms only. I'm prepared to concede that. It's better than the worst-case scenario. So the Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board has kept junior kindergarten. Whether they'll have it in September 1997 remains to be seen.

When you talk to their folks, the moms and dads and the grandfolks, about whether they want their tax break or whether they want JK — because they know that investing in junior kindergarten has payback that's tenfold; it's the biblical payback — they're prepared to cast that bread upon the waters.

I took three of the Ukrainian students who are interns here, in these placements — all the caucuses have been hosting them here — down to Welland for the weekend. They said yes, they'd be prepared to see small-town Ontario. I explained that Welland was an industrial city, 48,000 population, part of the whole Niagara region, close to Niagara Falls. Of course we went to Niagara Falls. The Ukrainian Cultural Centre down on McCabe hosted them, set them up with a billet and provided dinner on Saturday night and displayed the greatest of hospitality.

But these three university students prompted some members of the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, some of the parents of similar-aged children here in Ontario, to reflect on their own situations. I heard some real despair about whether some of those kids of those families are going to be able to get to university, not because they lack the academic ability — bar none, these kids are bright as can be, sharp as tacks — but because this government's increase in tuition fees has built yet another economic barrier against bright, young, capable kids going to university.

#### 1850

You tell the working family making \$28,000 a year — there are a whole lot of them, and I'm asking that you understand; I'm asking the PA and her staff to come



up with some breakdown not just of what the tax break is for respective income groups, but who those people are, how many of them there are, where they fit into what will inevitably be some bell curve kind of thing. A whole lot of families work hard to make \$28,000, \$30,000, \$32,000, \$34,000. The PA knows that; she understands that. I'm not suggesting that she's not understanding of that. I suspect it's the vast majority of Ontarians and Ontario families. I just want you to understand, Chair, that for those families — what was it? — a 40% increase in tuition doesn't come close to the \$9-a-week tax break; not even close.

What scared the bejesus out of these families is when they read about how the Minister of Education just a couple of months ago cut a deal with the University of Western Ontario so Western could charge full-fee, American-style tuitions for its two-year MBA program — tuition alone of \$18,000 a year.

Once again, I suppose from the perspective of some of the government backbenchers, they can reflect on the good old days. I guess it is the good old days, where once again with tuitions at \$18,000 a year it's becoming increasingly clear that only the children of the very richest will be going to university in this province, the children of the same very rich families who are getting, if they earn \$225,000 a year, a tax kickback of over \$15,000.

You don't understand, Chair. The children of those families don't need that tax break to enable them to go to university, and as this government increases tuitions, we're going to find fewer and fewer children of working-class families, of modest-income families, of incomes that are far more typical than they are atypical, going on to post-secondary education.

Let me refer you to what these people think of the good old days. I've been shuffling through the blue book, the revolution. On page 12, listen to what these people believe. This is all part and parcel of this tax break, yes sirree, part and parcel. In the handbook to Mike Harris's revolution, it is written that in 1992, tuition fees represented only 19% of the cost of a university education. But to say "only 19%" — here's the telling phrase — "down from 35% in the 1950s." By God, this government's going to take us back to the good old days, the 1950s — yeah, the good old days, when the kids of Ukrainian and Polish and Hungarian and Italian immigrants didn't get to go to university, when they couldn't afford university tuitions. That's the way it was in the 1950s. If these people think the 1950s were the good old days, they had better review the course of the last 40 years.

I tell you this: I can speak very personally about that. I was born in 1952. I was the first generation of my family, myself as a child of immigrant parents, both of them incredibly hardworking people — when I was talking about public libraries and this government's abandonment of public libraries, I remember talking to you about my grandmother. I remember that. I remember some of the objections. That was fine; people can object.

She's dead — she's been dead for 10 years now — but I remember how hard she worked. She was an immigrant lady, never went to school a day in her life, either here or

there. She was a peasant. I've been to the village where she was born and where she grew up. At 16 years old, she had her first kid. That's how it was done. I was blessed, and I'd like some colleagues in this House to reflect — because I know some of them share similar experiences — on people like my grandmother, how they came to this country uneducated, illiterate — no two ways about it, illiterate, couldn't read or write — 16 years old, with a baby. In contemporary terms she'd be but a child, and she probably was. She had never seen electricity, along with a whole lot of other things.

We're not talking that long ago. We're talking well within a whole lot of living Ontarians' lifetimes. She came here — we're talking about the tax breaks, Chair; we're talking about education and the cost of the tax breaks, and I want to relate this to what the Tories write about the good old days in the 1950s, when tuition reflected 35% of the cost of education for a university student, as compared to the 19% of 1992.

Here's my grandmother, like so many other immigrant ladies, with that flowered kerchief wrapped around her head and the literally handwoven clothes. As a little kid I watched her and I watched her husband, my grandfather, work like animals and work hard. I watched them as they sacrificed and as they invested through tax dollars in their community, and I watched them as they built their community and as they built public education and as they built public health and as they built institutions that were designed to help them and others like them obtain justice, with great sacrifice and great hardship, incredible hardship, never wanting for themselves but doing it so that their kids, and more important, they were realistic enough to know so that their grandkids — I'm talking about me, born in 1952 — wouldn't have to live like they did, and I didn't.

**1900**

You see, when their kids were university age back in the early 1950s, when university tuitions were, as the government speaks of in their revolutionary guide, in the good old days, in the 1950s, 35% of —

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** On a point of order, Mr Chair: Would you inquire if there's a quorum here present?

**The Chair:** Is a quorum present?

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Chair.

*The Chair ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** Chair, a quorum is now present.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** On a point of order, Chair: My point of order is to whoever called the quorum, to suggest that they are in the middle of a very important ceremony at the bottom of the staircase. Having the bells ring is not going to add to the elegance and importance of the recognition of our senior citizens of this province, and I think the House might recognize that.

**The Chair:** This is not a point of order. The member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you kindly, Chair. I was speaking to the cost of the tax break; in other words, who's paying for the tax break, because at the end of the day somebody pays. I was talking about post-secondary education and I



found myself compelled to talk in a very personal way about my own family, about my grandma. In the Slavic language you refer to her as baba, and grandpa is dido. I'm not in any way, shape or form being flippant, I tell you that; I wouldn't for a moment. She was special to me but to say that she was unique among her generation of new Canadians wouldn't be accurate either. Canada was built by people like that, as it continues to be built by new Canadians, not just from Europe but from Africa and Asia and from South America and Central America.

I remember, as I told you, how hard my grandparents worked. I'm not being disrespectful when I say they worked like animals. They worked like dogs, they did; in some respects they shortened their lives considerably because it was physical labour. These weren't educated people, and they weren't particularly well received. They came to this country at a time from which we have a history that isn't totally admirable, when new Canadians of this ilk, sadly in the same way as some new Canadians of this decade, were held in less than the highest of regard.

These were people, as I say, who lived their lives with incredible sacrifice. The concept of a vacation was non-existent. There simply wasn't such a thing as a vacation. They were small business people too. I remember as a very young child their small business; uneducated, both of them, either in their country of birth or in Canada, running a small business. A lot of folks in Welland understand the places, the old two-storey red-brick building on the corner of Hagar and Crowland. That was the grocery store, it was. It was before the supermarkets, before the A&P and the Loblaw's, and that's how people bought groceries.

These people, people like my grandmother, understood what it meant to build things and to own them in common, to own them as public institutions. They dreamt of the day when their offspring, maybe not the next generation directly but hopefully their grandkids, and they loved their grandkids, could go beyond high school and get post-secondary education. As I told you, I was blessed with that opportunity, but I'll similarly tell you now that subsequent generations may not be if this government continues to herald the days when tuition fees constituted 35% of the annual cost of education.

Let's go one further and see what else we are being promised, part and parcel of which is paying for this tax break, two thirds of which is going to the top 10% of income earners. The people who need it least are getting it most, and it's being paid for by working-class, yes, and middle-income earners and it's being paid for by their children and by their retired parents and by the sick and by the youngest in our society.

A tax break that I can't even begin to — perhaps the parliamentary assistant will be able to tell us, in view of all the suffering of victims of this government's bungling of the family support plan, in view of all the suffering that those women and their kids went through from approximately August 1996 through to the present — maybe this government will tell us how much of the tax break those victims financed.

How much of the tax break did those kids pay for with their suffering, with what amounted to literal hunger

because they went without food, with what amounted to homelessness because they were turfed out of apartments and rental homes and they were chucked out of homes they thought they owned because they weren't able to keep up mortgage payments? Perhaps the parliamentary assistant would tell us how much of the tax break those kids paid for with their suffering. That's part of what it's all about. We know there's a tax break, for whom, to what end, at what cost and who ends up footing the tab. I think we're getting a clearer and clearer picture.

I mentioned how frightening it was — I was over at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre on Saturday night because I had three of the Ukrainian co-op students down in Welland for the weekend. Friday night we were down in Niagara Falls, saw the falls, went down to Clifton Hill, past the casino, turned around, came back, went back to Welland. They were billeted by members of the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, people to whom I'm extremely grateful.

Saturday they followed me around as I did MPP stuff during the day. We started with the Canadian Tire Acceptance ribbon cutting down at 1000 East Main Street. Then we went to the market square and we did a 50th wedding anniversary, the Plains, up at the Lions Club in Fonthill. Then we went to the Club Richelieu because it was fête de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, and then we went to the pig roast at the museum on Hooker Street, the Welland Historical Museum, and then another barbecue over at Round Boys where there was a fund-raiser for Help a Child Smile. On Saturday night the Ukrainian Cultural Centre hosted a small dinner of, of course, Ukrainian food for these youngsters.

But while I was there speaking, these students being there from Ukraine and the members of the Ukrainian Cultural Centre, an incredibly generous people and hardworking in their own right and almost all of them working-class people, some small business people, there was one incredible observation by one small business person who folded his business rewinding motors, rebuilding motors, armatures, bearings, that sort of stuff. He said, "You know, this government talks a big game." He was referring to the Tories. This person isn't a fan of any government. He had some critical things to say about the last government and about the government before that, but he said: "This government" — he smacks himself on the forehead — "they don't understand small business either. They're just like other levels of government and other forms of government. They think small business is 20, 30, 40, 50 non-union workers. They don't understand the family business." As I mentioned, that was the kind of business culture I grew up in and that was the kind of business my grandparents had over on the corner of Hagar and Crowland Avenue, a small meat supermarket.

1910

They were prepared to contribute to the common pool — taxes, that's what they're called — so that young people, and not just the children of the rich, could get university educations. Those same young people are helping to pay for the tax break now, because you've got a government that wants to increase tuitions, already has and is going to do it more. You've got a government under the banner of deregulation, and it has already



begun that process by cutting the deal with the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario — this isn't in the United States; we're talking Ontario — so that the University of Western Ontario can charge full-fee, American-style tuitions of \$18,000 a year for its two-year MBA program.

The news has spread. The parents, and some grandparents, who were upstairs in the meeting room at the Ukrainian Cultural Centre on McCabe on Saturday night were talking about that. They had paid taxes all of their lives, I suppose no more joyfully than anybody has ever paid taxes, but paid them. All of us would like not to have to pay taxes. Heck, why not? It would be great. None of us are happy about paying taxes. These folks understood what this meant to their kids or, in the case of some of them, grandkids. It meant that yes, they might get \$5 or \$6 a week back in taxes, or pay \$5 or \$6 a week less income taxes, but that their grandkids were never going to make it through the doors of any university classroom. These folks said again: "Who likes paying taxes? Nobody does." But at the end of the day, if it was the difference between that crummy tax break or a university education for their kids, by God, they'd go with the university education any day of the week.

They do it with pleasure and they do it understanding that they are helping to build rather than being a party to destroying, that they are helping to create rather than being co-conspirators in an exercise that's going to roll us back 40 or 50 years into what these people regard as the good old days — the good old days when only the children of the very wealthiest could go to universities or, as my friend from Sudbury suggests, the élite.

I have no quarrel, and of course children of wealthy people should go to university, but so should the kids from working class families, so should the kids from families that are on fixed incomes, so should the kids of the injured workers and so should the kids of the single parent. If you want to put it in practical terms, they should be in university because it's going to make us a stronger society, a stronger province and a stronger country, and a more prosperous economy — which is where we get to the business of jobs.

This government promised 725,000 new jobs. They've picked up a new buzzword. I think it was Rob Fisher, Global TV, Sunday night. At the end of the week he exposes what he sees as somewhat humorous to his television audience. The new buzzword is, "Oh, 1,000 jobs a day, 1,000 jobs a day, 1,000 jobs a day." By God, it's been 1,000 jobs a day, we're two years down the road; we've got jobs coming out of our —

**Mr Ramsay:** Yin-yang.

**Mr Kormos:** Yin-yang. Thank you. Give me a break. A thousand jobs a day? Down in Niagara region, unemployment is up to 10.9%, when the national trend shows a decline, albeit modest. Nothing to do with this government or, quite frankly, the Chrétien Liberals.

It was Mr Ramsay who said "Yin-yang," and I appreciate that, because I was searching there. He obviously does a lot of crossword puzzles.

We've got unemployment rising in Niagara region, contrary to a modest national trend downward in terms of unemployment. We've got unemployment among people

under 25 double that of their parents. It boggles the mind how, quite frankly, neither the federal nor the provincial government has declared a crisis in response to these incredible and ongoing high levels of unemployment.

The news is the depression, we're told, is over; the stock markets are booming. Stelco, I'm told, is considering a dividend. That will be some comfort to the 350 Page-Hersey Stelco workers out on the sidewalk down on Dain Avenue after eight months of fighting for a modest pension improvement and wage increase so they can have parity with their working sisters and brothers at Stelco in Hamilton — not even parity; something akin to parity. Stelco, the economic news said today, is contemplating declaring a dividend. Its stockholders are ecstatic. The 300-plus workers who have had to strike for the last eight months with little by way of good faith on the part of Page-Hersey Stelco are shaking their heads in amazement.

Unemployment in the north: I know northern members will be speaking very specifically to this. Unemployment in the north continues to rise and rise at the slow and ponderous but never-ending process of increased joblessness.

Bankruptcies are up for the second year in a row in this province, this Mike Harris Ontario. Business bankruptcies are up. The only people making money are the bailiffs. The government talks about 1,000 jobs a day? Come clean. The government won't tell us what they are, where they are and for whom they are, but we know that if there are any jobs being created, they are inevitably part-time, temporary and minimum or subminimum wage, and that's not how you build a healthy economy.

This government advocates trickle-down with its program of tax breaks for the very richest. In two years now, I say to you, Ontarians have been trickled down on enough. They don't want to be trickled on any more. They're tired of being trickled on. Ontarians know, I'm confident they do, because I know folks in Niagara. I understand the chambers of commerce. Ms Swift from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, she's a supporter, but she also, if I recall correctly, agrees with this government's proposition to let the minimum wage drop, which is what this government's committed to do. This government is committed to holding the minimum wage until, by attrition, by the growth of the economy, it effectively drops.

**1920**

You see, Ms Swift, who oftentimes isn't, is an advocate of a low-wage economy. She advocates on behalf of business people, saying business people have to be permitted to pay lower and lower wages. I suppose from that perspective alone it's not an unattractive proposition. But you see, what small business down in Welland and Thorold and Pelham understands is that when you don't have people in your community making decent wages, they don't have anything in their pockets to spend at small businesses, whether they're retail businesses or service industries.

I suppose part of this trickle-down is the suggestion, and I've heard it said by some of the government members, that if we give those folks making 250 G's a year — that's an income of a quarter of a million bucks a year — if we give them \$15,000 back each year, charge



them \$15,000 less tax — but there's a problem here. Let me put this one to you, if I may.

Folks making 28 grand a year get back \$450. A household making 28 grand a year pays nine bucks less tax a week. Chair, I want you to run through this with me, because if folks making 28 grand a year pay \$9 a week less, \$450 a year, why do folks making 260 grand a year, almost 10 times that, pay not 10 times \$450, which would be \$4,500, but they pay \$15,000 less in taxes? There's some inherent unfairness about that. There's something that's very troubling.

There's a huge flaw in the parliamentary assistant's argument, but what it does is expose what this is all about. It's about a tax break only for the rich. What's the old phrase? The folks from up north will understand: "The rich get the gold, the working folks get the shaft." That's what we've got here.

One more time, once again: Rich folks, the ones making a quarter of a million dollars a year — if somebody can earn 250 grand a year, God bless, but let them pay their fair share of taxes, because this country, this community, this province has been awfully good to you if you're making a quarter of a million a year. It's been awfully good to you, a heck of a lot kinder to you than if you're struggling along at a low-wage job, the type of jobs that are becoming more and more common in Mike Harris's Ontario, eking out a mere 25 grand a year and still having to raise two or three kids and pay your mortgage and pay PST and GST.

I tell you, this province has been awfully kind to folks making a quarter of a million, a heck of a lot kinder than it has been to those working people struggling to pay for their kids' clothes and to pay a mortgage or rent and to pay for groceries. What's remarkable is, they do without but they still manage the occasional movie rental so the family can have some entertainment on a Saturday night. Listen, I salute them. I salute those working people, those fixed-income people, those retirees, the seniors who are struggling along on those low incomes, for whom the tax break is the least.

Then there's Paul Martin. Honest to goodness, what did I read in the paper today? Yes, he's going to increase the RSP — he talked about it — contribution level to \$20,000 a year, so that the rich will enjoy yet an even greater tax break. He's a collaborator. Paul Martin and Ernie Eves, they're fellow travellers.

I'm just counting heads to make sure there's a quorum in the House. There is no — bring them in here, Mr Baird. Fifteen, sixteen. You're still shy. Seventeen. You're still shy three.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** Okay, that will do. Eighteen. We still need two more. Mr Baird, bring these people in here. We'll not carry on without quorums, by God, and don't say I haven't been fair to you. It would be nice to see a few more Tories in here so that I wouldn't have to rise on a point of order and point out to the Chair that there isn't a quorum.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** They're down with the seniors.

**Mr Kormos:** We're considering that they might be — I think things are moving, Chair. I hear movement there

in the background. There we go. Mr Baird, you're going to have to do better than that. Where's the high-priced help? Where are the minions? Tell them to scurry out there and drag in some of the Tory caucus members.

If they were unionized, like the staff of the New Democratic Party, they'd probably be a lot more eager to do their jobs. They'd know they'd have decent wages, seniority rights, fair pay, vacations, the right to grieve when Tory bosses are cruel and arbitrary in their treatment of them.

I'll carry on, Chair, because we were talking about the unfairness of this tax break when we see that basically the rich are being pieced off to the tune of approximately 10 times whatever modest break there is for working people. That's what it comes out to. There's an incredible compounding there. With this government in power, the richer you are, the more you get. And look who pays for it. Again, we know it's students, seniors, retirees.

Let me tell you about folks down at the Welland seniors centre. I dropped in there on Friday afternoon over on Lincoln Street. They have a little workshop there. They have a great hall. Pearl Kaleniuk and just a whole lot of people were active in getting that built. It was built over 10 years ago now.

You have seniors struggling, recognizing that the populations of Niagara and places like it are getting older, that there's going to be a growing need for seniors' care. Yet they see this government paying for its tax break for the very rich by attacking seniors and care for seniors, be it they shut down the hospitals or be it the threat of defunding public seniors residences like Sunset Haven or the new Rapelje Lodge, which is being constructed now.

The last government participated in the Jobs Ontario program with the feds of the day and made it possible for Rapelje Lodge to be built as it's being built now. The building began, fortunately, before June 1995. We're fortunate that the last government made that contribution, in cooperation with the feds, to the building of Rapelje Lodge.

**1930**

The fear now is that part of the payment of these tax breaks for the very rich is coming from the downloading of costs on to municipalities. We've got Rapelje darned near finished in terms of being built. What folks down in Welland and the folks over at the Rose City Seniors Centre were concerned about is, will there be sufficient operating costs, sufficient funds to operate it so that they and others will be able to use it as they get older and start to become a little bit less mobile and can no longer live in their own homes? I suppose, yes, you can simply remain alone without assistance and die a horrid lonely death, alone in a house that's lived in only by you, or you can, as so many of us believe, contribute and work together to build things like seniors homes so that older folks can live out their senior years in dignity and with some modest care.

I would very much want to know from the parliamentary assistant the percentage of households that are in the \$23,000 to \$28,000 range and perhaps some understanding of who these people are in terms of being seniors, young families or fixed-income families. Of the number



that are earning between \$23,000 and \$28,000, oh yes, their taxes are going to be reduced to the tune of just about a buck a day. Well, that buck a day doesn't even begin to pay for the increased user fees that are flowing down on to families like them as a result of this government's downloading.

We know that the last downloading model was going to increase property taxes in Niagara region by a minimum of \$73 million. It means that taxes for each and every property could increase on the average of hundreds of dollars each year, regardless of the income of that person. You see, property taxes are oblivious to how much you make. They don't know that you're retired and that your income's been cut in half or a third or a quarter, unlike this government's tax scheme where the very rich are going to get proportionately back all that much more than are the very poor. They're going to pay proportionately far, far less than are the poor.

Why did I make reference to Paul Martin and his proposal that we may well see RSP contributions increased to up to \$20,000 a year? We know that RSP contributions are a way to avoid taxes — properly so — but to avail yourself of the \$20,000-a-year limit, you've got to have a heck of a huge income on an annual basis. The working stiff doesn't come close to being able to earn enough income to qualify for 20 grand a year, and if she or he even did come close, they wouldn't have that extra income to enable them to invest that 20 grand a year in RSPs, the mutual funds; and there's nothing wrong with them per se.

This government wants to go back to the good old days, the 1950s, when university students paid —

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** You're getting repetitious, Peter.

**Mr Kormos:** I'm just moving on to the next; that was a transition. One of the Tory members here said — and he's darned right — I was repeating myself, but it was a transition. I was using that to fill in some time while I moved to the page in the revolution book that I wanted to get to.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** At least I'm listening.

**Mr Kormos:** He is listening. I guess I'm happy as a pig in a barnyard that Mr Runciman's listening. I'll be pleased to hear his response. In some respects I can anticipate it, or at least imagine it.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Wait a minute.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Check it out.

**Mr Kormos:** I'm counting quorum again, Chair. Three, six, seven, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17. Who'll give me 18? Nineteen. Need one more. Okay, 20; we've got it. It's tough keeping the backbench folks in line.

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** It must be your speech.

**Mr Kormos:** It's tough. No, I want to be fair. It's just too easy to stand up, call quorum and then sit down and let the Clerk do the counting. I think it's far more appropriate to demonstrate that we could do that.

**Ms Lankin:** Self-regulation.

**Mr Kormos:** That's right. As Ms Lankin from Beaches-Woodbine points out, that's what self-regulation is all about. If only these people could regulate themselves.

I want to get back, though, to what I had been referring to some time ago. I suppose it's part and parcel of the trickle-down theory this government has. It didn't work for Ronald Reagan. It didn't work for Margaret Thatcher. When it gave MPPs a 10% salary increase within what seemed like mere days after it slashed social assistance budgets by 21.6%, I suppose that was consistent with its trickle-down theory: Take away from the poorest. Whack them with fairness, as the member for Fort York is so inclined to point out. Take money away from the poor and give it to folks who are already making a fair bit of change, right? Bounce some real coinage, as they say down on King South.

That's what the government did, took away 21.6%, almost 22% of the support for the poorest, people on social assistance, and then gave MPPs themselves — all of us; I have no quarrel — around a 10% salary increase, from 70 grand up to \$78,004. As I say, that's the minimum wage here at Queen's Park. Most of the Tories make substantially more than that because that's how you keep Tory backbenchers in line.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Hey, hey, hey.

**Mr Kormos:** Well, that's how it's done. Toni Skarica was a parliamentary assistant. He got some 11 and a half grand beyond his base MPP salary, and Toni, I'm told — Mr Skarica rather. I'm sorry. I apologize, Chair. It's Toni with an "i" as a matter of fact, not Tony with a "y." But Toni Skarica said: "There's something wrong when the Premier and a couple of unelected staff people can run the entire province. It's a dictatorship." That's what Toni Skarica has to say about this government and its leader.

Gary Carr from down Oakville way was a good parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General. He was. Again, understand that the minister doesn't fire the parliamentary assistant. Ministers have parliamentary assistants assigned to them by Il Duce's office, the Premier.

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**Mr Baird:** Hey, hey, hey.

**Mr Kormos:** I didn't say that. Toni Skarica said that. "It's a dictatorship."

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** On a point of order, Mr Chair: It seems to me that the current speaker is a little off the topic. I wonder if you could remind him of the need to stay on the topic.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Floyd Laughren):** Members will understand we're on section 1 of the bill, which allows a free-ranging debate. I would remind the member for Welland-Thorold to keep that in mind.

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: I think it's not in order for a member to quote another member or impugn another member's motives, as he is doing with Mr Skarica, the member for Wentworth North. I think if you're going to quote another member, you have to be extremely careful and accurate. I would ask that you ask the member for Welland-Thorold not to refer to the member for Wentworth North without pure accuracy and to



attribute the source of those comments you are attributing to the member for Wentworth North.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, member for Mississauga South. I do believe you are correct and I would urge the member for Welland-Thorold to be cautious when quoting the member for Wentworth North, to make sure that he's quoting him precisely.

**Mr Kormos:** I apologize to the member for Mississauga somewhere and I appreciate her guidance in that regard. I want to be very careful. Precisely. I should be very careful. It would be most unfair of me, and quite frankly improper, entirely beyond the realm or scope of the rules, to misquote another member.

This is what Toni Skarica had to say: "There's something wrong when the Premier and a couple of unelected staff people can run the entire province. It's a dictatorship." That's what Toni Skarica said about this government and this Premier. "It's a dictatorship."

His colleague Gary Carr was a parliamentary assistant whom I admired. Gary Carr was the parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General. My last work with Gary Carr was on Bill 84. Bruce Crozier from Essex knows what I'm speaking of. Gary Carr sat with us in committee as the parliamentary assistant to the Sol Gen, or Solicitor General. Gary Carr — and I think all of us noticed it, the New Democrats sitting there, the Liberals sitting there and I suspect more than a few of his own colleagues, and that's where the trouble began.

I think there were a couple of quislings among his colleagues, people who ratted him out to the Premier's office, because Gary Carr as parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General during the course of the Bill 84 hearings began to show more and more understanding of the position being expressed by professional firefighters. He did. He wasn't by any stretch of the imagination abandoning Bill 84 — he wasn't — but he was starting to understand — there was no question about it — some of the criticism of Bill 84 that was being expressed by firefighters.

We could tell that quite frankly in no small part by his demeanour during the course of the hearings. He would actually pay attention, unlike his successor who would nod off, chin on his chest, head rolled over on to his shoulder, jaw agape from time to time; I'm talking about Gary Carr's successor, not Gary Carr.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Well, it was pointed out by a participant in the committee hearings in Windsor. We were in Windsor the last day of the hearings, the very day that Gary Carr was turfed, and there was the new parliamentary assistant —

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** On a point of order, Mr Chair: It would seem that after the timely intervention of my colleague from Muskoka that the member opposite would have been called to account and would have recognized that our responsibility in this, as in all debate, is to speak to the order that is before us. I will remind him of the order before us today. Because of the fact that he has spoken now for over two hours without any direct reference to it, it is to be presumed he has not read the document. I would suggest that he restrict his comments to this year's budget.

Standing order 23(f) denies all of us the ability to debate again issues that have already been voted on in this House. Mr Chair, I would remind you that the various legislative initiatives with which he has done a superb job of regaling us into complete stupor, and I'm sure most of the people watching across the province, have related to pieces of legislation long since voted on and long since passed into law. In deference to all of us, I would ask you to have the member opposite speak to the 1997 budget. Thank you.

**Ms Lankin:** Point of order, Mr Chair.

**The Acting Chair:** The same point of order?

**Ms Lankin:** Yes, on the same point of order. I would say that was a bit more of a political speech than a point of order. On the point of order: With respect to budget bills and tax bills, and you know this after your many years in the House, there is a precedent in this House that there is an allowance, a very wide-ranging debate. I've been listening very carefully to the member for Welland-Thorold, who has been addressing many changes in the province that have come about as a result of government budget decisions to cut expenditures. Those expenditure cuts are directly related to the lack of revenue in the government, that lack of revenue directly related to the tax cut, which is in the bill that is before us. I think the member is directly on point and I suggest that he be allowed to continue without further interruptions from the member from Scarborough.

**The Acting Chair:** I thank the member for Beaches-Woodbine. As I said before, as long as the member for Welland-Thorold from time to time relates his comments to the content of the bill, he is in order.

**Mr Kormos:** I stand admonished and I apologize to the Chair and all the members if I've digressed. But by God, you say it's been over two hours. Hot damn.

In any event, Bill 84 and our reference to it — and I appreciate Ms Lankin, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, and her intervention, not in defence of me but in consideration of the issue.

Don't forget I prefaced my remarks by saying we understand there's a tax break. For whom? That's starting to become clearer and clearer. Two thirds of that tax break is going to the very richest of Ontarians. To what end? Yet to be determined. At what cost? That's what we're dealing with right now, the cost, the real cost of the tax break.

I'm not going to go back to where I began and talk about the victims of the family support plan, those women and kids. They paid some of the cost, some substantial cost.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Well, I don't find it at all humorous that you called on little kids to pay the cost for the tax break.

We talked about university students, how they're bearing it. They're paying for this tax break. Man, they're paying by virtue of fewer and fewer working-class kids, fewer and fewer kids of small business people, fewer and fewer kids of modest income families are going to be able to go to university as this government revels in the good old days of the 1950s when university students' tuition was 35% of the total cost and where kids from working and lower-income families simply didn't go. Ms



Lankin from Beaches-Woodbine, in her comments to the point of order, points out how Bill 84 is part and parcel — because Bill 84, we know, was all about, at the end of the day, facilitating the privatization of firefighting services here in Ontario.

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Why that had to be facilitated, if you will, was because this government knows communities are going to get whacked with downloading. Communities then are going to look for avenues — and we talked about this before. The cost of the tax cut includes diminished services and user fees. Bill 84 is designed to provide those diminished services by virtue of private firefighters. The Laidlaws, the Rural/Metros, American-style, import the very worst of the United States.

That's what Bill 84 was about and that's why I had concern and continue to have concern about how when Gary Carr, the fine parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General, began to express interest and empathy, understanding, of the concerns being expressed by professional firefighters, including their concern about privatization and their concern that privatization is going to bring lower-quality firefighting services, that people are going to suffer, people are going to die as a result of Bill 84 and how it permits the utilization of part-time and private firefighters, firefighters who are not as well trained, who are not experienced working in teams — people are going to die. That's what firefighters told us across the province.

Gary Carr started to show some interest in their arguments, show some sympathy and — this is merely a suspicion — was perhaps starting to express some concern about how Bill 84 had as its ultimate goal, in companion with Bill 129 that we're debating here right now — none of these pieces of legislation stand independent of each other. When we go all the way back to Bill 26, we start to look at some of the major cornerstones and all these bills are like little pieces of a puzzle. Some are tinier than others; some have solid backgrounds, where it's more difficult to identify the outline of the thatched roof, whatever kind of puzzle it is you put together. Bill 129 is part and parcel of the whole puzzle.

Gary Carr, as you know, on the final day of the committee hearings was dumped, turfed. How did Gary Carr respond to that? Still the member of the Progressive — well, the Conservative Party — and of that caucus, Gary Carr said, "Mike Harris has got to realize this is still a democracy, not a dictatorship."

I respect Gary Carr's insight in that regard. I've known him for a good chunk of time. I don't agree with him on a whole lot of issues, but knowing him as I have since 1990, I have some high regard for Gary Carr and know him to continue to be a strong and committed Conservative. I have no doubt about that. Gary is committed to his party and clearly wants to remain with this government, but he speaks of Mike Harris as having to realize that this is still a democracy and not a dictatorship.

The goal, we're told, is to create jobs. The government is bound by its promise to create 725,000 jobs. The government wants us to believe — as a matter of fact, there's a fellow called Mark Mullins, PhD. He's an economist who endorsed the revolution with the zeal of

one of those 1960s Maoists holding it overhead, chanting in unison.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Revolutionaries are revolutionaries. That's one of the problems we've got here.

Mr Mullins says the combination of this tax cut, the non-priority spending reduction and the elimination of job-killing government barriers will make Ontario a magnet for new investment and new jobs. We're two years down the pipe here. There are no new jobs. I'm telling you, Chair, there are no new jobs two years later. There's a lot of grief, a lot of people suffering, a lot of people paying for the tax break. Let me tell you, man, they're paying a huge price for this government's tax break for its rich friends.

There are no new jobs. Down in Niagara unemployment rises. Unemployment rises and rises, till it's now 10.9%, and unemployment among people under 25 twice that. Unemployment among people who are well trained, well educated, highly skilled, indeed experienced in their respective former workplaces, is 10.9%. Does this government declare a crisis? Does this government say it's time for some urgent and direct action, while young people under the age of 25 suffer unemployment rising into the 20th percentiles and their parents suffer at 10.9% in the Niagara region alone?

This government does the proverbial fiddling, and this government reduces taxes for the very richest, knowing full well that reducing taxes for the very rich, especially now that Paul Martin has talked about increasing RSP contributions to \$20,000 a year, permits the very rich to get even richer and doesn't do one darned thing about creating jobs. This government and its little spin doctor, its \$1,000-a-day people that it is oh, so held captive by, this government that is being held hostage by the backroom gang, figures that if it repeats something often enough, folks will begin to believe it in that bizarre way that the advertising and marketing people convince you that it's a new, enhanced product when it's nothing but the same old liver.

This government talks about a thousand jobs a day. By God, if there had been a thousand jobs a day, we'd be awash in jobs. We'd be drowning in jobs, and we're not.

*Interjection:* Yes, we are.

**Mr Kormos:** Unemployment is at 10.9%, I've got to tell you.

*Interjection:* Federally.

**Mr Kormos:** Unemployment in Niagara is 10.9%, and if those members across the way don't believe it, come on down to the food banks, come on down to the soup kitchens where I was on Friday afternoon with Howie Hampton. We visited the soup kitchen down on Division Street, at Holy Trinity Church, where families, seniors, women with little kids are increasingly — this is in small-town Ontario; this isn't downtown Toronto — where women and kids and old folks, old people, retirees, seniors are increasingly having to resort to the soup kitchen for something akin to a balanced meal. Down there at Holy Trinity Church, Reverend Binns and his congregation and his parish are generous enough that they let their church, the little basement area with a kitchen, be used as a soup kitchen. They are there every day of the week.



## 2000

These are people most of whom I know, and I know their histories. These are people who didn't always have to use soup kitchens and they're not pleased to have to use them now, but they're there; just like they're down at the food bank on Fifth Street, which used to be Carl Stratton's mission, the Open Arms Mission; just like the Salvation Army down in the Niagara region finds its resources increasingly strained, week after week, month after month, and as often as not by moms or dads with kids.

Unemployment isn't just a statistic. It's oh, so comfortable here, where the minimum wage is 78 grand a year, to talk about unemployment in percentages and to treat it as if somehow it's something abstract. Let's understand what unemployment means. You lose a job and most of the time you go on UI. You and I both know that UI benefits have been reduced both in terms of the length of time you can receive them and in terms of the amount of wage replacement you get. The percentage is much lower.

Let's understand unemployment. Let's understand what it means when somebody loses a job in this province. You spend just shy of a year on UI, and then, notwithstanding that you've done your best, notwithstanding that you're pounding the pavement, notwithstanding that you've been knocking on doors and making the phone calls, you still find yourself without work and you go on to welfare.

By this point, you've used up whatever savings you have in the bank. If you were fortunate enough — and let's not make mistakes about RRSPs. Oh, yes, the people who are going to have their taxes reduced by 15 grand a year, the people making a quarter of a million dollars a year, have the RRSPs. The hardworking women and men who are earning — at hard and, as often as not, dirty and, more often than not, unsafe work — wages of \$28,000 to \$30,000 to \$32,000 or \$34,000 a year don't have RRSPs. They can't get tax deductions based on their contribution to an RRSP because they don't make enough money to contribute to RRSPs. They're the ones who are far more likely to end up unemployed than these Tories' rich friends, the quarter-million-dollar-a-year earners who are getting new tax breaks in excess of 15 grand a year, while their tax cut means a mere buck a day at best for hard work and lower-income earners, a buck a day, all of which, plus, is consumed by new user fees and new costs and new financial burdens.

Let's understand what unemployment means. You spend a year on UI, and when your UI benefits terminate, you get general welfare assistance. Eventually you lose your home and you lose your furniture. Your likelihood of getting work diminishes with each day that your impoverishment increases. More often than ever before, people who were hardworking, successful people, perhaps educated people in their jobs, find themselves homeless or living in rooming-houses or hostels in deplorable conditions.

I put to the parliamentary assistant some very specific questions and I would ask that her staff give her the advice with which she can respond: that is, the number of families earning between \$23,000 and \$28,000, and in the respective categories above, until you get to the top 10%

of income earners; and the profile of those families, whether those families are single families, single-person households, whether they're seniors, whether they're young working families, whether they're families on a fixed income.

I will have more questions as we progress through this bill, but I think it's imperative that we have that data. It's unfortunate that we've had to squeeze it out of the government. One would have thought that would be the sort of data that would have been prepared. One would have thought they would have had some concrete identification of jobs that they promised. I ask them now for a little stronger profile of who the households are that we've been talking about, what they consist of. I'll be asking them later very specifically about the jobs. Thank you kindly, Chair.

**The Acting Chair:** Any further comments on section 1?

**Mr Wildman:** Prior to the vote at five to 6, we had asked for some specific information from the parliamentary assistant regarding the tabling of studies by the ministry of the effects of the tax cut. Considering that this legislation is entitled An Act to stimulate job growth, we are still waiting, as I understand it, for the tabling of that information.

We also asked for some specifics with regard to numbers of dollars that would accrue to people at certain levels of income from the tax cut, and it seems to me that if the government had done its homework, it would be able to provide us with that information. I don't think it's unreasonable to request it.

I'm sure this work has been done. I don't think any government would be irresponsible enough to act in a reckless way where they would just decide to cut taxes without having looked at the effects, whether or not they would have the desired effect. I'm talking about a government now, not a political party, a government that has all of the bureaucracy — the economists, the accountants, the tax experts — working for it, a government which would want to act in a responsible manner. For that matter, if they don't have enough within their own ministry, they can contract for it. It would be most irresponsible to proceed with this legislation without knowing the ramifications, or at least some predictions about the ramifications.

My friend from Fort York got up and quoted an article by a well-known economist who said that tax cuts do not work if they are designed in the way these tax cuts are designed, where most of the money will go to those who already have a great deal of wealth. What we're hoping is that the government has information, studies, which would refute Mr Donner's views as quoted by my friend from Fort York.

Mr Chair, I'll sit down and give the members of the government party who are here carrying this bill the opportunity to table those studies now.

## 2010

**The Acting Chair:** Are there any further comments on section 1 of the bill? If not — I'm sorry.

**Mr Wildman:** No, I want an answer to that question, Chair.



**The Acting Chair:** I can't force someone to give you an answer.

**Mr Wildman:** I thought he was standing up to answer.

**The Acting Chair:** Does the member from Muskoka wish to respond?

**Mr Grimmer:** Mr Chair, I should certainly comment on the long and protracted commentary that we've received from the opposition on section 1 of the bill and simply respond that the impact of the income tax cut is quite clearly explained in the budget document itself and quite clearly set out in the papers that accompanied that.

The Income Tax Act is designed to have its biggest impact on the lowest wage earners in Ontario and in fact approximately 60% of the benefits from the tax cut will be concentrated on middle-income Ontarians. So I think that is the response, Mr Chair.

**The Acting Chair:** Member for St Catharines.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I want to continue along that line because I know my friend from Algoma would be concerned about that answer and I want to deal with a couple of other issues.

First of all, I am trying to think if I were a bank president and I made as much money as a bank president, how much money would I get back from a tax cut, as compared to the low-income person out there?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Nepean is trying to ingratiate himself further with the Premier with interventions, though one wonders how that could possibly be, in light of the way he's been trying to ingratiate himself with the Premier for the past three weeks.

But I want to make sure that we deal with the issue of the income tax cut and its ramifications for various expenditures; for instance, the closing of hospitals in areas such as Ontario east and Ontario west. When I look at the Niagara Peninsula —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** — and the member for Scarborough East is mocking as we in the Niagara Peninsula lose five hospitals — I don't think the member for Niagara South and I don't think the member for Lincoln and I don't think the member for St Catharines-Brock, all of whom are members from the Niagara Peninsula, would be amused to hear those remarks in light of the fact that there are hospitals scheduled to close in all of those communities.

Yes, the government will, when the House is no longer sitting, make some kind of change to the policy, because it's had continuous heat from various people who have visited and listened to the people in those areas, such as those who are defenders of Douglas Memorial Hospital in Fort Erie, the Port Colborne hospital in the city of Port Colborne, West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby, the Niagara-on-the-Lake Hospital, and of course Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines.

One has to wonder whether it is this particular item — that is, the tax cut — which is, according to the Dominion Bond Rating Service, costing this government close to \$5 billion a year in lost revenue and therefore money that either has to be borrowed or has to be obtained by making even deeper cuts to health care services in this province. Thousands of people signed a petition to ask

that Hotel Dieu Hospital remain open. The people at the St Catharines General Hospital want to ensure that that institution continues to operate and provide services to people.

When you look at the fact that Dr David Foot, the author of Boom, Bust and Echo and a well-known demographer, had an awful lot to say about the elderly people in our area and how much they would need hospital services, one has to wonder how we can afford a tax cut which is going to prompt the government, despite the promise of the Premier, to close hospitals.

You will recall that the Premier, during the 1995 election campaign — and I know Tory members like to check off and list what they consider to be promises kept. I can remember several that have not been and some that have been defied completely. I remember, as I think all members of the House do, during the leaders' debate in May 1985 during the provincial election campaign, Mike Harris being asked by Robert Fisher of Global TV the following question, a question that's related to: "Will all of these cuts result in the closing of hospitals?" Let me share with members of the House the precise quote, precisely what Mike Harris said as leader of the Conservative Party: "Certainly, I can guarantee you, Robert, it is not my plan to close hospitals."

That will surprise the people who are associated with and need the services of the five hospitals in the Niagara Peninsula that are closing, or hospitals in Sudbury or Thunder Bay or London or the Lambton-Middlesex area or other areas of the province where the hospital closing commission is showing up, because those people know that in order to finance a tax cut which will benefit to the greatest extent the richest people in our province we're going to close hospitals.

Then we had a huge contract signed with the members of the medical profession of this province. I don't know too many people who would object to that, because they believe that our doctors require adequate compensation. Where they were surprised was where the money was going to come from. They found out they were going to close hospitals, underfund services, fire nurses and fire other hospital workers so that we could pay the doctors more money. A lot of people I talked to said, "Look, I don't mind the settlement, because I want our medical profession to be adequately compensated, but I didn't know you were going to close my hospitals and fire nurses and other hospitals workers to pay for this."

There were some out there who even believe that part of the reason was to hush the doctors up when you close the hospitals, to buy their silence. I'm going to tell you, you can't buy the silence of doctors of integrity in this province. They will not be silenced by what they feel is compensation they had coming to them. That's not going to silence them when hospitals are closing and they know we need those hospitals.

Members of the House may be surprised to know that the area of this country which has the largest percentage of people 55 years of age and over is the Niagara region. When people become older, they tend to need more hospital care. They don't want to show up at a hospital to learn that it's on critical bypass, that somehow they can't enter the hospital for an emergency service. They



don't want to know that they have to wait weeks and months and sometimes years before they can get orthopaedic services, a hip replacement or other joint replacement.

I've had letters from people who are concerned about that and would like to move up on the list. I'd like to move everybody up on the list. We can't move individuals one above another because a politician intervenes. That would be wrong. What we need is an adequately funded system, and if you'd forget the silly tax cut, if you'd forget about that income tax cut, we could have that service.

I'm going to tell you, most people in this province would applaud you. I would applaud you from the opposition benches without any reservation if you said, "Look, we've assessed the situation. We don't want to make deeper cuts. We don't want to borrow more money," because we know that when the Conservative Party's term is finished, the debt of this province will have increased by \$20 billion.

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A lot of people said to me, "One thing I'll say about the Conservative-Reform Party is they were concerned about the deficit." When I have to break the news to them that the debt of this province will likely be \$20 billion higher when they leave office than when they entered office, they're quite surprised. When I tell them the government has to borrow money to finance the tax cut, they are shocked at that, particularly the more cautious, conservative-minded people. They say, "I didn't know that." I tell them to consult the Dominion Bond Rating Service. I say, "Don't blame me, because I'm an opposition politician; consult the report of the Dominion Bond Rating Service," which I've quoted in this House before and that's what it says.

We're paying an awful price in this province for a tax cut which is going to benefit the richest people the most in terms of the dollars that will be back in their pockets. That is, of course, unacceptable to people in the Niagara Peninsula who see their hospitals closing and their health care deteriorating as a result of underfunding of the system. The hospitals can't provide the services they would like to any more, unfortunately.

You go to some of them and ask, "Do you want me to raise this in the Legislature?" and the district health council, "Do you want me to raise these issues in the Legislature so that I can help you to obtain more funding?" and across the province they're saying: "No, we can't, because they'll punish us further. We don't want anything said. We're going to try to do it quietly, behind closed doors." But they're finding out that doesn't work and hasn't worked, because they still close the hospital or they still underfund it.

My friend the member for Leeds-Grenville is here. He has a psychiatric hospital in Brockville, and I know the expression on his face and his words of shock when it was announced by the hospital closing commission of Dr Sinclair that they were going to close the psychiatric hospital in Brockville.

It's important not only for the patients, and they're paramount, there and from the surrounding area who are receiving the service, but it is equally important for the

community, because Bob Runciman can tell you what that will mean in terms of a loss of jobs in the community and the negative economic spinoff of that move on the part of this government.

Mr Chairman sitting in the chair this evening, the member for Nickel Belt, will know what the effect is in his home town of Sudbury, because my friend Rick Bartolucci has told me on many occasions that which the members from Sudbury would all be aware of, that despite all the talk about closing hospitals and then turning around and reinvesting in the community, they don't reinvest in the community to any extent; they simply reannounce old NDP announcements.

I was looking through something I saw in the St Catharines Standard on the weekend. My good friend Tom Froese had a full-page ad in the St Catharines Standard. He talked about reinvesting in the community. Some of the things I see reinvested here I can remember Frances Lankin announcing, and Ruth Grier, and even before that Liberal ministers — Murray Elston was one and Elinor Caplan another. I can remember these announcements being made and yet we have them re-announced to this province. I know it's not really new money.

That's why I don't buy into the crackpot realism. There are some people out there who will say, "Well, you have to close hospitals." I'm speaking more of my own area because I know my own area; I can't speak for other areas to the same extent. They have convinced people: "You have to punish yourself. You people have been living high on the hog. You people have had hospital services. You've been able to get into the hospital when you need hospital care. You've had sufficient nurses to look after you in years gone by. You've had all the other hospital workers who make a hospital work successfully. You have to punish yourself. You can't have that any more. We're going to take that away from you." Some people buy into the crackpot realism.

Even some scribes like to think, "Perhaps I know more than the average person out there and I'm not going to buy into the emotional arguments the opposition will make, those opposed to closing hospitals, because we know, we've been briefed by the ministry people, and you know this is good for all of us."

It's not good for all of us. It's nonsense and it's unnecessary. In our part of the province — I can speak with most familiarity with that — our hospitals have already gone through a rationalization of services. They have already chosen the areas in which they will become expert and deliver services. This exercise has already been gone through in many areas of the province, and now you're asking them to withdraw more.

You know what it's going to lead to: Rich people and privileged people will not tolerate a lack of service, so what they're going to do as a result is get their service somewhere else, and they're going to be pressuring for a two-tiered system. The argument is made, "What the two-tiered system does is relieve the pressure on the regular health care system, so if a person has enough money, he or she should be able to go to the front of the line with that extra money to put into the system." I can tell you one of the reasons I'm in politics is to ensure that doesn't



happen, to ensure that a person's pocketbook doesn't dictate the kind of medical care that person gets in this province, but rather the medical needs of that individual dictate what kind of service that person will receive.

I can recall being interviewed by someone from the taxpayers' coalition, not this election, but in the 1990 election. They were going to screen the candidates and produce their page. I knew I didn't have a chance with this organization anyway, because I knew who the individuals were and what party they have always supported.

That was one of the arguments we had. The person said: "We've got to have user fees, don't we? What's the difference if somebody pays every time they go to the doctor or every time they get a medical service?" I said, "The difference is that it won't deter me," because that's really what you're saying, that it should be a deterrent fee. You're not going to be able to charge enough money to make a significant difference in the budget of the Ministry of Health, but what you're going to do is deter people. You don't deter wealthy people, you don't deter upper-middle-income people; you only deter low-income people from getting that service.

I have always rejected the fact that I've seen some political parties put forward that there should be one rule for the rich and the privileged and one rule for the rest. I guess that's why I would never choose one of those political parties that believes that, but rather one that believes that we should have universal access to health care and that we don't need a two-tiered system and that we don't need the Americanization of our system.

I remind members of this House that an organization known as Rural/Metro is waiting just on the other side of the border to move into Ontario. In fact, they've moved into Ontario. They've made some purchases in Ontario. They've made some alliances in Ontario. They're going to provide ambulance services. I'll tell you something: If you want ambulance services just across the border in northern New York state, they cost about seven times as much as they do here. If you need oxygen, you pay more. If you need a splint, you pay more, and the meter is running as soon as you are in that vehicle.

That's a different approach. There are a lot of things I like about America. It's a wonderful country in many ways. I don't want to be an American citizen, I don't want to emulate a lot of what they do in the US, but it is a country that has been successful in many ways. One area where I've always disagreed with my American friends is the way they deal with health care. That's what happens when you have American companies move in. They have a different approach. It's for profit.

2030

Should we sell cars for profit? Absolutely. Should we sell consumer products for profit? Yes. Should we be able to make a profit on the sale of a home? Yes. Our system works on profits and incentives. I have no objection to reasonable profits and reasonable incentives. I do object, and will always object, to the fact that there are some people who want to profit from health care, because I think that's an essential and basic human service that governments should provide and fund.

We cannot provide nice cars for everyone. We cannot provide estate homes for people. We cannot provide 54-inch television sets with high resolution. In other words, we can't provide a lot for people in our province. But we can provide the basics, and one of those basics is health care. I see that this government, by choosing to have a tax cut which benefits the rich the most, instead of investing that money in health care and education, has made a mistake.

St Catharines city council, by resolution of Dr Joseph Kushner, an economist from Brock University, very much a small-c conservative, put forward a motion, which was endorsed by all on city council except those who apologize for Mike Harris, asking the provincial government not to proceed with the tax cut. Dr Kushner has engendered the names Professor Negative and Dr No because of the attitude he's taken to public spending.

One of the lackeys on the Ottawa Citizen, the editorial page — somebody just sent over an editorial here. You have to know who just got the jobs there. They've got one guy who was a — sorry to divert from this — researcher for Mike Harris. Here were his qualifications: He's as old as the member for Nepean. I made a mistake the other day. I said 27; he's actually 28. I apologize to him for that, and he will correct me by nodding if I'm wrong. His name is Dan Gardner and he's in his late 20s, a YPC. I think his qualification was he had been involved with the Fraser Institute at one time and also he was a policy adviser to Mike Harris. Now he's writing editorials in the Ottawa Citizen. What do you expect you're going to get from that?

**Mr Wildman:** Who owns that paper?

**Mr Bradley:** Conrad Black owns the newspaper. He told everybody, and I know the member for St Andrew-St Patrick probably believed him when he said it, through Radler, his henchman in Chicago: "I don't interfere with the editorial content and I don't interfere with the way the newspaper operates. I just want it to be profitable."

What happened was, they walked into the Ottawa Citizen, they fired out the door a lot of the people with a progressive point of view and they brought in all these Fraser Institute people. One guy had been a research assistant to the Reform Party and the other guy to the Conservative Party of Ontario. They're both Reform parties. They've both been Reform researchers and now they're writing the editorials. Don't send me any of those editorials by those people who are going to naturally be echoing what this government wants and echoing what the richest and the most powerful and the most privileged people in our society want.

**Mr Wildman:** Like Conrad Black.

**Mr Bradley:** Like Conrad Black, as the member mentions.

I know in education the same things exist, and in the environment. My friend the Minister of Environment, who had responsibility for the Niagara Escarpment Commission snatched from his arms just weeks ago, would want money invested in the environment.

I want to give him his credit. He's done a good job in selling the fact that the government has cut his staff by one third, cut his budget by about one third and he's delivering a better service, he says. He has to say that, I



know that, but in his heart of hearts he knows he needs the staff and the resources to do the job.

I was saddened, as I know the chairman was saddened, when they saw Mike Harris take from his hands responsibility for the Niagara Escarpment Commission, to which he had a personal attachment and I think somewhat of an emotional attachment. Then he had that given instead to the Minister of Natural Resources. I wondered why that would be. Why could that possibly be?

Then they announced the appointments to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, and we see one individual who was appointed who owns land on the escarpment and wants to get his land out of it, and others who may well be good people — don't get me wrong — but have no interest in preserving the escarpment lands. That concerns me.

I know people in education are concerned about the tax cut that's in this particular bill because they know they're losing educational services. This very evening, Bill Bickle is being honoured upon his retirement. I was supposed to be there tonight and I wanted very much to be there tonight but I'm trying to help the government out, to get its agenda through by the end of this week. I've been in discussions with the government House leader and I've listed all these bills. I said, "Why don't we deal with all these bills this week, get them cleaned up?" Then, if the House leader had agreed to that, I could have attended the retirement dinner, at least for a period of time tonight, for Bill Bickle and one for Jim McMahon, the president of OPSTF, who is leaving to take a provincial appointment with that organization. I can't attend those two evenings because I can't get a commitment out of the government House leader to proceed with the legislation he told me was so important.

I know some of their members must be saying, "Didn't we think several" — what is the one you have, Minister of Natural Resources? The Game and Fish Act. I asked the members of our caucus, some of them from the north, where they really are involved in this, "Is there anything in it that would make us hold it up?" They said: "No. Proceed with it. Let's deal with it. Let's debate it. Let's get it through." Then I looked at some of the others. This bill we have before us tonight, I thought we'd be finished with this this afternoon, no problem. Then on the supply bill I was saying, "Let's deal with that supply bill. We've got the time to do that," and a number of other bills that we had to deal with. I kept saying: "Why don't you bring these forward? You've said you need them."

The truck safety bill: My friend from Huron knows that everybody in the House is for the truck safety bill. That's going to be coming back on Thursday. That's in committee now. But I said, "Why not bring that in and we will proceed with that right away," because we know over the long weekend there could be some accidents take place and I would feel a pang of conscience if I knew someone was unnecessarily injured because this bill had not passed this House.

But when we got into this discussion it was quite apparent that the government House leader wanted not only our wallets but our bank accounts as well. Oh, he's over on this side of the House now, fine fellow that he is. I get the feeling, however, like with Charlie McCarthy

and Edgar Bergen, that when I see his lips moving, Mike Harris is talking. I get that feeling because I know what a reasonable man he is, I know how fair he is to deal with. I see a situation where, unfortunately, instead of dealing with the government legislation that's important, the Premier's advisers, Guy Giorno, Tom Long and the others —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** Perhaps the member for Huron could tell me more names — want these rule changes through to grease the skids for the radical revolution. So the parliamentary assistant, my friend the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, is compelled to sit at some length now by herself, previously being advised by the member for Nepean. I thought she could do this herself. I want to tell you, Isabel, if I may be personal for a moment, I think you are able to handle this all by yourself. You don't need the advice of a 28-year-old YPC, a man eager to move into cabinet; you can do this on your own. I have full confidence in you. You were at one time the deputy House leader before they made Norm Sterling the deputy House leader. We all know his strong commitment to the legislative process — I read it into the record the other day — when he said the only way he could make the government listen was by having some tools to be able to listen.

**2040**

I have a note that says perhaps my time could be used more productively at this moment in certain discussions with House leaders. I always enjoy my discussions with the other House leaders. They are so productive, they are so cordial, they are so helpful, and so — I know this will break the hearts of many in the House, and there is sadness all around — I am going to have to relinquish the floor very soon. I said that just as the member for Welland-Thorold walked in after his short oration.

I hope that my friend the parliamentary assistant has taken in all the discussion that has been taking place this afternoon and this evening and that she will as a result share with her caucus colleagues, and most importantly with members of the cabinet when she speaks to them, the wisdom that she has heard from this side of the House, so that she can effect the kind of conversion we require to enable us to make Ontario a better place.

I note to my colleagues in the Liberal caucus, some of whom might wish to speak, that I am going to proceed to a matter of discussion with my good friend the member from East York, the government House leader, Management Board Chair and reincarnation of a former member from eastern Ontario, whom you will recall, Mr Chairman, who gave the same kind of answers so that you never knew what they really were.

**Mr Wildman:** James Auld.

**Mr Bradley:** James Auld himself, and it's a compliment to say that — and with my good friend Bud Wildman. I won't give his real name because he's known as Bud Wildman, the member for Algoma.

I thank the parliamentary assistant for being so very attentive, as she has been, and you, Mr Chairman, for being so tolerant of a little bit of additional debate beyond what might be contained in this bill.



**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** In the few minutes that I have I want to make some connections for the government, who don't seem to be making them for either myself or the folks out there who I suggest, from the conversations I've had with people over the last two years, are quite concerned about this tax break. They know that nothing is ever neutral, nothing ever stands on its own, that when you give something, something is taken away, and when something is taken away, often-times something is given.

In this instance, the giving of what seems to be a gift by way of the tax break, as so many others have said, is so much more for the rich and so much less for the poor. Folks out there who live in the real world know that means that something has been taken away, that there is a reduction in services and that the cut in the government budget of some \$6 billion is a direct hit at communities, people and families in communities. There's a correlation between the tax break and the cuts in services and a fraying at the edges of a system that we have all worked very hard over a number of years to put in place.

In order to present my thoughts in a more concise and organized fashion, I'm going to share with you a letter to the editor that appeared in the Sault Star some time ago, about another instance where a tax break was attempted with the very same rationale and underpinnings that this government is presenting to the people of Ontario, that in fact a tax break would stimulate the economy so that there would be more work for people and everybody in the end would be better off.

I know that the members across the way who have some sincere interest in this will want to pay attention and hear what this gentleman has to say about the jurisdiction of New Jersey. This letter is written by a constituent of mine by the name of David Craig and it was sent in, as I said, some months ago.

"It's interesting and revealing to learn that the Mike Harris government's Common Sense Revolution, complete with its 30% cut in provincial personal income tax phased in over three years, was actually patterned on the successful 1993 election campaign of Christine Whitman, the present Republican governor of New Jersey." Interesting.

**Mr Kormos:** Ah, we shed some light.

**Mr Martin:** We shed some light.

"An analysis of the New Jersey experience written by William Walker" — one of our own scribes — "appeared as a three-part series in the Toronto Star," a year and a half ago, I think it was, something like that.

"The author points out that in March 1994 Harris" — that's our Premier — "went to New Jersey to meet Governor Whitman and to seek additional advice. Two months later the Conservative program was presented to Ontarians at a news conference.

"The appeal to 'common sense,' which had figured so prominently in the Whitman election campaign, became the Common Sense Revolution of Mike Harris.

"Now that Governor Whitman is three years into her mandate, would it not be instructive to see how they are faring in New Jersey?"

This is the part everybody should pay attention to because I think it's important. I don't think anybody in

this House who takes their job responsibly would want to lead this province down a road that was not good for everybody who works and lives and pays taxes here. I don't think that's true. I don't for a second think that even the members of the government would lead us down that path if they thought that's where we were going.

But the unfortunate part about all of this is we haven't been presented with anything in this House, either past or present, that indicates to us that this government knows where it's going or what it wants to achieve, or how it's going to get there. Nor is there an impact study to indicate to us that some particular thing is going to happen, nor have they been able to point to anywhere where this program has been successful. I suggest that you listen to the rest of this letter because it's quite telling.

"According to Walker, in order to pay for the tax cut Whitman has had to lay off thousands of civil servants, cut many health and social service programs, slash funding to municipalities and school boards, privatize many government services, and siphon more than a billion dollars from the state pension fund." Is this beginning to sound somewhat familiar?

"To offset reduced state funding, municipalities have had to institute all sorts of user fees" — I think that was something the member for Welland-Thorold talked about quite extensively in his short speech here this afternoon, user fees, taxes — "such as for garbage collection, and increase property taxes dramatically.

"As for the 30% tax cut, a study by the non-partisan state Legislature's research arm showed that less than 17% of New Jersey taxpayers — its high-income earners — would receive more than half the cash value of the tax savings from the Whitman cuts, so their cuts were reduced somewhat."

So when the opposition stands up in all their pomp and circumstance and suggests — when we make the case that most of the money that's going to be given back to people will in fact be given to the rich, and less of it will be given to those who really need it, the working class and the poor, the situation in New Jersey is pointing to that reality, that this is what happens.

"Her whole idea was to put more money into the hands of taxpayers so they would spend it locally and create jobs." That's a noble aspiration, I would suggest, if it works. "Not necessarily so. One commentator points out that wealthy New Jerseyans who have received sizeable tax relief" — and I think I was told, if I have the numbers here someplace, that in fact people making \$250,000 or more, they get what back by way of a tax break?

**Mr Kormos:** Fifteen thousand and seventy-five bucks.  
2050

**Mr Martin:** Yes, and people making under \$25,000, what do they make?

**Mr Kormos:** A buck a day.

**Mr Martin:** They make about a buck a day, and it's that dramatic. It is truly that dramatic, Speaker and friends across the way.

"One commentator points out that wealthy New Jerseyans who have received sizeable tax relief haven't spent the money where it would create jobs." Listen to this. "They buy AT&T stock with it, then AT&T lays off 7,000 people and the stock goes up and they make even more money."



**Mr Kormos:** A pretty sick cycle.

**Mr Martin:** A pretty sick cycle all right.

"Whitman predicted the tax cut would create 450,000 jobs over four years." Does that number sound familiar to anybody? Have we heard that number before somewhere, 450,000 jobs over four years? "But through three quarters of Whitman's mandate only 115,000, mostly low-wage, service sector jobs have been created."

The members across the way are so apt and so ready to say at the drop of a hat, "How do you create jobs?" We know how they create jobs. They create jobs by giving money to McDonald's so that they can hire more people to flip hamburgers and serve people at the front counter.

"To me," the letter goes on to say, "deep cuts in government spending to reduce the deficit are understandable, but even deeper cuts in order to satisfy an election promise of a 30% tax cut are not understandable."

"Money left in the hands of poor people or used for social services will be spent locally for food, shelter, dental work, bus passes and the like."

We know the story. Money that's given to people who are working class or poor, dependent on social services, is flow-through. It very seldom stays in the pocket of the person receiving it for any more than a day. It's spent almost immediately.

I remember one time in Sault Ste Marie somebody explaining this to me as the same as in the wintertime in the north when you run out of gas and you want to start the car up right away, you put a little gas in the tank but you save a little bit for the carburetor. Giving money to the poor is a little bit like putting gasoline in the carburetor. It fires immediately. It has an immediate effect on the economy and it generates the kind of activity that creates the real jobs that we all want for our family members and friends and neighbours, not the kind of McDonald's jobs that the folks across the way are so ready to provide for all of us, if they can get away with it.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** — they just keep the gasoline in the carburetor.

**Mr Martin:** The tank is full too. If you have a government that's taking its leadership responsibility seriously, you'll have gas in the tank as well as gas in the carburetor and communities will work.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** And your government really did a good job of that, didn't they?

**Mr Martin:** Yes, they did. You come to Sault Ste Marie some time and talk to me about Algoma Steel and St Marys Paper and the ACR and how well that community was doing after our government was giving some leadership and showing some responsibility. You're damn right it is. If there was a government in this place with the intestinal fortitude to give that kind of leadership and to take that kind of responsibility, we wouldn't have the number of people out of work in this province that we have now. We wouldn't have children going poor. We wouldn't be labelled by the United Nations as the country that is probably the richest in the world and yet has the worst case of child poverty anywhere that can be pointed to or looked at.

What we're asking for here is not a government like in New Jersey. What we're asking for here is a government like the governments we've had in Ontario over the years, no matter what stripe, who cared about people, who did things rationally, who allowed things to evolve in a way that included people and didn't make the rash and very volatile changes that this government is doing that have such a devastating effect, particularly on those who are most vulnerable, on those who are at the edges and those who are in need of assistance from those of us who find ourselves in a more fortunate position.

Anyway, let me go on with the letter here so that we can finish this up:

"That same money, handed to people who already have enough, will likely be spent on things like foreign travel, buying into an international mutual fund or investing in the money market. How would that create jobs?" How would that create jobs, I ask you. "Would it not just widen the gap between the rich and the poor?"

**Mr Kormos:** You've got it. That's what's happening in Ontario now.

**Mr Martin:** The gap is widening. With every day we sit here, with every day we allow this government to continue down its path of recklessness towards the people of this province, towards the community of this province, the gap between the rich and the poor widens and we become, all of us, collectively poorer for it.

**Mr Kormos:** While the middle class disappears.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Well, you almost destroyed the middle class.

**Mr Martin:** I seem to be touching a nerve in the government members here. It's funny how when you tell the truth and it touches a nerve, we get that kind of response always here.

**Mr Kormos:** You've got the porkers squealing.

**Mr Martin:** We've got the porkers squealing. We're touching a nerve and they're responding.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The north is telling it as it is.

**Mr Martin:** That's right. And as David Craig from Sault Ste Marie goes on, to finish off his letter, he says: "While I agree with the Tories' aims of putting the province's financing in order and creating 750,000 jobs" —

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** Why are they giving a tax cut, then?

**The Chair:** The member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mr Martin:** Listen to this. He says, "I think they should scrap the planned tax cut," which is what we're talking about here. That's what this bill is about, is continuing down this path of devastation and destruction for the working class, for the ordinary folks of Ontario. This gentleman here, who speaks from experience, who knows what he talks about —

**Mr Kormos:** Tell us about Algoma.

**The Chair:** The member for Welland-Thorold, you don't have the floor. He has the floor.

**Mr Kormos:** Tell us about Algoma.

**The Chair:** Please.

**Mr Martin:** I'll tell you about Algoma here in just a second.

**The Chair:** The member for Sault Ste Marie has the floor.



**Mr Martin:** That's right, but I don't mind having a little conversation here with my colleagues.

**The Chair:** Well, I do mind.

**Mr Martin:** I think it's healthy and in good form. Anyway, as I was saying: "I think they should scrap the planned tax cut. Then they could ease up on the severity of their attack on health care, education, the poor, the unemployed and the vulnerable." I couldn't agree with him more.

The other thing that disappoints me with what the government is doing and this bill and the continual devastation that any of us who are paying attention, who are living in the real world and are beginning to recognize more and more the frayed edges of our society, is that they're not coming across with any information that indicates to us that they know what they're doing or that, if this thing turns out somewhere down the line to be counterproductive, they have a plan to recoup and recover. We're all heading like lemmings to the edge of the cliff and they don't give a damn if we all go over. They're not going to put up a fence halfway through to save at least half of us. We're all going over.

To suggest that for some reason or other that kind of information is not available or people can't do it is just not going to cut it either. I'm sure the bureaucrats sitting in front of the parliamentary assistant will agree that it's not that difficult to take those numbers and play with them and crunch them around a bit and to come up with the impact that this kind of program will have on the lives of communities, on the lives of families, on the lives of people in this province.

As a matter of fact, we did a bit of a study back when the expenditure cuts were announced in Sault Ste Marie. We had an outfit called Econometric Research Ltd come in and do a study for the labour council so that we might have some sense of what's going on here and might be able to respond in some positive, constructive and creative way. We know, those of us who do economic community development, that all of this is tied together, and we need to know, if we're going to forge a community together for everybody, just what impact decisions by organizations as big as government are going to have on us so that we can put some mitigating plan in place and respond to the devastation that may occur.

That's where, for example, the whole Algoma Steel thing came in. In the early 1990s, we discovered that Algoma Steel was in difficulty. Dofasco, who owned it at the time, decided that it was going to walk away and let it sink or swim on its own. We knew that without the support of the parent, this very fragile company in the middle of a system laid on us by Mulroney of a dollar that was too high, interest rates that were out of the park, was going to have some difficulty.

Dofasco's plan, in partnership with the federal government and some others in leadership at the time, was just to let Algoma die, we found out later, because they thought that there was no room in Ontario for three major steelmakers, that there was only room for two and that Algoma was going to go the natural way and pretty soon be out of the way.

The Steelworkers in Sault Ste Marie decided differently. On behalf of their members they sat down and

came up with a plan that called for the government of the day, which happened to be, thank God, the NDP government led by one Bob Rae and some others of the colleagues who are still here today — together the people of Sault Ste Marie, the workers at the steel plant, management at Algoma Steel, the financial institutions, we all got together and came up with a plan that not only saved the jobs that were there at Algoma Steel in those very difficult days, but in such a way that allowed Algoma Steel to today be making the kind of profit — it wouldn't happen under this government.

**2100**

There's no leadership being given here, no responsibility whatsoever being taken for anything. The only answer they have to the economic challenges we face today is this silly, very narrow tax cut that they think will somehow stimulate the kind of job creation that saving Algoma Steel did. At Algoma Steel we not only saved jobs, but we are now investing in Sault Ste Marie a \$4.5-billion investment in a new steel-making complex that will set us up to be players in the steel industry and market into the next century. That's leadership.

If these guys were in power when that was happening and the only answer they had was this silly tax cut, where would we be? Where would Algoma be? Where would Sault Ste Marie be today? I can tell you where it would be. It certainly wouldn't be in the shape it is in now, even though now, after we got Algoma on its feet, after we got St Marys Paper on its feet, after we got the ACR on its feet, boom, the Conservative government of Mike Harris comes in and rips literally thousands of jobs, by the time they're finished it will be close to 2,000 jobs, down in Sault Ste Marie in the public sector.

On one hand a government comes in, and in partnership with the community and the private sector and the workers and the financial institutions saves our bacon, saves that which the economy of that community is built on, and then a few months later the next government comes in and, boom, rips 2,000 jobs; 2,000 of some of the best jobs by way of the kind of work that was being done, the kind of services that were being offered to people, the kind of commitment by those workers to our community, not only in the jobs that they had done but after they're finished work and on the weekends.

They're even thinking now, if you can imagine this, of privatizing the lottery corporation. The Liberal government of the late 1980s decided to bring the lottery corporation to Sault Ste Marie because they, as a government, recognized the contribution that kind of move would make to Sault Ste Marie. Certainly when we became government in the 1990s we made sure that deal was consummated so it was actually going to stay there and prosper there.

All of a sudden we have this government now coming in and in their mad rush to privatize everything that walks and makes money —

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Really? Privatizing?

**Mr Martin:** — we're going to lose the first real example of diversification to the economy of Sault Ste Marie in literally years, and with it about 600 to 700 jobs —

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Diversification?



**The Chair:** Member for Kitchener, order. Take your seat, please. There's too much noise, too many interjections. The member for Kitchener, I ask you. Member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** Speaker, I suggest to you that I must be touching a nerve here. It's funny. Whenever we get up on this side of the House and we begin to tell the truth and to tell it like it is, the place starts to squeal.

Anyway, I was just saying that a government that has a tax break as its only economic development strategy, as its only stimulus for the economy, is bereft, is bankrupt of ideas. They should be seriously thinking about whether they can continue to lead this province. I wouldn't want to suggest this too loudly here, but instead of going home for the summer and having a vacation, they might want to think about perhaps calling an election. Let's have it, right now. Call a snap election. We're ready. We'll go.

The people of this province will be ready to tell you exactly what I'm telling you here tonight, that your program is not working and that a tax break is not good enough and that what's going to happen in Ontario has already been forecast by what's happening in places like New Jersey. Is that what you want for Ontario? Is that where you want to take us? Is that where you're leading us? Is that what we're to tell the people we represent when we go back home, whenever we get out of here this weekend?

Is that what we're to tell them, that the \$6-billion cut in government spending, which is driven by this tax break, is going to reduce the employment? This is really important here. The \$6-billion cut in government expenditure that this government is going to impose because of their need to give a tax break is going to create — listen to this — 233,235 fewer jobs in Ontario.

I could share other figures with you but I don't think I need to. The question of employment has been the central question of the opposition over the last six months. I know Mr Phillips has raised it on a number of occasions. Where are the jobs? Show us the jobs, the 750,000 you said you were going to create, the 450,000 that Christine Todd Whitman said she was going to create. Where are they? Where are these jobs?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Martin:** No, they're not creating jobs. What you're creating —

*Interjections.*

**The Chair:** Order, the member for York Mills, the member for Kitchener, the member for Peterborough, the member for Kingston and The Islands. Order.

**Mr Martin:** All this government is creating is unemployment and devastation for people out there. If it hasn't hit you yet, if it hasn't touched you yet, if you haven't been affected by this yet, just wait, because it's coming. It's coming to your town soon. It's coming to your neighbourhood soon. It's coming to your street. Somebody in your family, somebody you know is going to lose their job, somebody who probably has spent the last 20 or 30 years being the best they can be, whether it's in teaching or in social work or in health care, delivering services, programs, caring for people, educating people.

They're being told, simply because this government wants to deliver on a promise to cut taxes, that they're no

longer needed any more, that they need to have a look around and see what else they could do. After years of investing in their career, investing in being the best they could be as teachers or social workers or health care workers or whatever, they're told that they should be out there now looking to the new economy for these jobs that the folks across the way say they're going to create.

They keep asking us, "How do you create a job?" If it's to give McDonald's a tax break so they can hire more teachers to flip burgers, or to give it to Burger King so they can hire more people to cook french fries, that's not on. It's not what we're about. It's not what we're going to support. I suggest to you that every ounce of energy we have will go into fighting this and to making sure that what you're doing becomes known to as many people as possible. Let me tell you: The people out there already know. They're already on to you.

Over the summer, as you look at the polling that I know you're doing every day and every week now, you'll begin to understand and to realize that you're not getting away with it. You can only pull the wool over the eyes of the people for so long. You can only hurt so many people until eventually it comes home to roost, until eventually you've hurt everybody in some direct or indirect way.

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A year ago in Sault Ste Marie we did a survey, sent out a package of information across the community; 3,300 residents replied. Do you know what they said? The overall message: The majority would rather the provincial government hold back its promised tax cut and maintain services. People are really anxious, fearful of the impact and opposed to the cuts. That's what they said. Of the total of 3,280 who returned the cards we sent out, 3,245, all of whom signed their names, were opposed to Premier Mike Harris and his cuts.

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** Who said that?

**Mr Martin:** The people of Sault Ste Marie, the good people of Sault Ste Marie, the working people of Sault Ste Marie said that. Only 35 of those 3,300 people supported the government's actions, and some of those reactions, I have to tell you, were very angry because I was sending this out in the first place, probably card-carrying Conservatives or Reformers.

I just want to wrap up my few moments this evening by reading to you a couple of notes from some of my constituents, just so you know what they're thinking about your program and what it is you're doing to them, and to let you know you're not getting away with it, that they know what you're doing and they're going to fight back.

This is from E. LaForge. It says:

"Mike Harris, our country did not get like this overnight. So you won't be able to fix it overnight. Quit making the people suffer. I know you're not suffering. These cuts don't affect you. You, Mike Harris, try and live on \$900 a month with three kids and see if you could do it. If there was a way to get you out of government, I'd vote for it, because I didn't vote you in."

Here's another one from an Armand Mei, and it goes like this:



"I'm afraid it is too late to tell Mike Harris anything. I did not vote for him, and I think the time will come when we go to the polls again." He's right. It's not too long off. We're two years in now. I expect another year or so and you guys will be real anxious to get out there and meet the people again and find out if they like what you're doing. We'll be ready. "I'm wondering why we are not building a four-lane highway across Ontario. We can take people off of welfare and unemployment insurance and they will also pay income tax."

What a novel idea: Put people to work building roads and they'll pay taxes and the ledger won't look as bad as it does now. But, no, you'd rather kick them in the rump.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** Wait a minute. Who said that?

**Mr Martin:** That's what the people are telling me. I've got a whole whack of letters here I could read for you this evening, but I won't, because I know there are people in the Liberal caucus and in my own caucus who want to put thoughts on the record, the same as me, who are genuinely concerned about this tax break and what it's going to impose on the people of Ontario. I want them to do that.

My question, after all that, to the parliamentary assistant, if she gets a chance to respond some time this evening: Where are the impact studies? If you're so bound and determined to move ahead with this income tax cut, as I feel you are, what is it you've got that will tell you when this becomes counterproductive; when there are more people losing their jobs than are getting jobs and when more of us are being led over that cliff than you think is healthy for the economy of this province? Show me where those studies are.

I have some. I can share them with you any time you want, and there are other studies, I'm sure, around this province that will say very much the same thing. I have a study I was looking at earlier that was done in the home town of your Premier, Mike Harris. It was done by a firm led by a Mr McCracken, who says a lot of the same things that —

**Mrs Marland:** Will you speak through the Chair.

**Mr Martin:** No, to you. I want you to hear this. The Chair knows this; the Chair is from among us. I want you to hear this, because you obviously don't understand it, or if you do understand it, you're not letting it affect what you're doing and the kind of thing you're doing within your own caucus.

This government is driving government cutbacks, and government cutbacks are not in the best interests of communities. Until you get that through your knucklebox and begin to react in a way that reflects an understanding of that reality, we're all going to be hurt. Our communities are going to be hurt, our families are going to be hurt and people are going to be hurt.

Where are the studies? Where are the impact studies? What can you give us that will make us a little less anxious and a little more comfortable that you really know what you're doing? Where is it anywhere that you've actually gone back to New Jersey? I know Mr Harris went to New Jersey in 1994. Has he been back lately? Has he talked to Christine Todd Whitman? Has he gone back to walk around the inner core of some of the

cities in that wonderful state to see exactly what's going on because of the imposed tax break? Has he been there? Does he know that? Does he understand? Does he understand that's where he's leading this wonderful province?

Organizations as reputable as the United Nations are saying about Ontario that on the one hand we're a rich province — the financiers are happy with us; we got our debt and deficit in a shape that makes them happy — but on the other hand, we're being told by those organizations that we have unprecedented child poverty, that the way we deal with our native people is unconscionable, that our environmental regulations and standards are now questionable.

You need to pay attention to that, because those are indicators that are very important and probably affect the lives of those of us who actually work and live in communities on a year-round basis, more so than the very rich you're proposing to help out with this tax break, who probably spend six or nine months —

**Mrs Marland:** Most of us live in communities all year round.

**Mr Martin:** No, you probably spend six or nine months in the province and the rest of the time you're out of the country somewhere, like your Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. When's he been back in Ontario lately? When has he gone up to Sault Ste Marie or to Welland-Thorold or to Niagara Falls and to Sudbury —

**Mr Bartolucci:** He's got to go to Hull.

**Mr Martin:** That's right. He's got to go to Hull. He doesn't even know where some of the tourist attractions in the province are, for God's sake. He puts out a document on tourism that doesn't include any of the tourist outfitters up in northwestern Ontario, for goodness' sake. This guy is a typical example, though, of the attitude that's coming at us from across the way. They don't spend enough time in the province.

**Mr Bartolucci:** What about the Minister of Northern Development and Mines? You've got to talk about this guy.

**Mr Martin:** I don't even know if he has a ministry any more or not. I don't know what they do. Does anybody know what they do?

**The Chair:** The member for Sault Ste Marie, address the Chair.

**Mr Martin:** Do you know what they do, Speaker?

**The Chair:** Please address the Chair. Just address the Chair.

**Mr Martin:** Okay, Speaker, to you: The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines it used to be, brought in by Bill Davis and the Tories — I remember John Lane, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, was a champion of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. They brought it in and it was to be the lead ministry in northern Ontario, the ministry to pull that vast geographic area together and put in place an economic development plan that would see us more included in the economic life of this province.

What's happening to it today? Where is the minister? Does he know anything about it?

**Mr Bartolucci:** It's too far from Toronto.



**Mr Martin:** Too far from Toronto, yes. Maybe he's gone to Japan with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade to meet with some folks who are going to tell him something about northern Ontario, I don't know.

I would suggest to the members of the governing party that you spend a little more time at home in your ridings, spend a little more time talking to people in your neighbourhood, people in your family. Ask them how many people they know who have been affected either directly or indirectly by the program you're introducing, by the spinoff of this tax break you've already introduced and now want to make worse as time goes on. See if they know any more than we do re your plan, re the impact studies you've done or not done, and what it is you have in store for us next.

Thank you very much, Chair. I've appreciated the time. I've appreciated the attention of the members in the government caucus and of course my colleagues.

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**The Chair:** The Chair recognizes the member for Mississauga South.

**Interjection:** I thought you didn't want to prolong this.

**Mrs Marland:** With all respect, I'm not interested in prolonging this debate, but I am interested in putting some facts on the record. It's too much to sit and listen to one diatribe after another of their point of view without putting on the record some of the corrections that are necessary to be made in this debate.

It's fine to accept that there's a different opinion on that side of the House from this side of the House, just as there is a different philosophical goal for the future of this province and how we get there. It's a bit like a basic Economics 101 lesson. We could stand here for the next four years and try to explain something that everybody else in Ontario understands except my colleagues across the floor. If you do not take money from the people —

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Marland:** Do I have to be subjected to the interjections, Mr Chair?

**Mr Martin:** How about your interjections the whole time I was speaking?

**The Chair:** Order. The member for Sault Ste Marie, you had the floor. The member for Mississauga South has the floor now.

**Mrs Marland:** We have talked over and over again about how it works when you do not take additional tax money from the people in this province who pay personal income tax and how, if we take a lower percentage, a lower rate of income —

*Interjections.*

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Spina, stand up and withdraw.

**Mr Gerretsen:** You should withdraw. Come on, Joe. Withdraw it.

**The Chair:** Order. If there was a remark made by you, sir, I haven't heard it. If there's any reason for him to apologize — have you said anything which was contrary to the regulations of the House?

**Mr Spina:** If it's something that offended someone, I withdraw it.

**The Chair:** But you're not in your seat. If you take your seat, I will listen to you. I will take the time for you

to go and take your seat. Have you made any comments which need to be withdrawn?

**Mr Spina:** I withdraw the comment, Speaker.

**Mrs Marland:** We're discussing a basic lesson in economics here. We're talking about the fact that, if you reduce the level of taxation to the people of this province through their personal income tax level, they will not have to submit as much money to the government. When that happens, obviously more people have more money to spend.

**Mr Martin:** Talk to the people in New Jersey about that.

**The Chair:** The member for Sault Ste Marie, you had three quarters of an hour to talk. Now it's the member for —

**Mr Martin:** If you can't take it, don't dish it out.

**The Chair:** Order. I don't have to repeat it again. The member for Sault Ste Marie, I don't want to warn you again.

**Mrs Marland:** I'll try to explain this basic lesson in economics. If people do not have to submit as much money to the government, it means they retain more of their earned income. The majority of people — not all people, but the majority — if they have more disposable income will spend it. As soon as they spend that money, whether it be on manufactured goods or services —

*Interjection.*

**The Chair:** The member for Welland-Thorold, I don't want to warn you again.

**Mrs Marland:** The people who are providing those services or manufacturing those goods or selling those goods are employed, and the more people who are working because more people are purchasing those services or those goods or commodities — it means that for each of those additional people who are working, they too are paying their share of income tax. It's not difficult to understand that the more people who have jobs, the —

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** So why are you punishing the poor?

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Cochrane North.

**Mrs Marland:** The overall revenues to the province are increased by more people working, and it's a very basic formula as to why there are more jobs created when people have more disposable income.

The fact that the opposition choose not to understand it — I don't believe they really don't understand it, but they choose not to agree with it, not to understand it. The point is that they never chose to implement that kind of policy, which would have helped this province in the last number of years.

It's really interesting when people on the other side talk about children in poverty, and both parties have done that tonight, and suggest we're not doing anything about it. It's particularly significant because the Premier of this province, who promised he would implement a breakfast program for hungry children —

**Mr Kormos:** Suggesting it? We have outright stated it. Tell us about the family support plan.

**Mr Len Wood:** Tell us about Ipperwash.

**The Chair:** The member for Welland-Thorold and the member for Cochrane North. You'll have an opportunity



to speak, the member for Cochrane North, if you would just wait your turn. The member for Welland-Thorold, I have warned you.

**Mrs Marland:** Fortunately, the people who need help in this province are now getting help they never had before. When we talk about who is needy, who has difficulty in this province, the argument is that all our policies are adversely affecting these people. My friend the member for Sault Ste Marie stands there and reads letters from people who complained about what policies of the government have affected their lives.

I didn't come tonight with a raft of letters, but I have them from families who were in crisis before, single-parent families who were not working, were on welfare and in fact chose to come to this province because the welfare rates were higher. The change in our policies has finally made them accept the fact —

**Mr Kormos:** You had suicides because of your welfare cuts. That's what you had.

**Mrs Marland:** Those families now are working. I have the letters from the young mothers who now are out working, and they are thrilled to be working. They are proud to come home from work and have the kind of normal life that the single mom next door who has worked all along has had. They feel very strongly about the fact that they've been given the opportunity, through some of our Ontario Works programs across this province, to upgrade their skills, and the role models they in turn have become for their young children is one of the most valuable aspects of this policy of this government. It can never be underestimated how important that role model is: a role model of a parent who has self-esteem and pride because they are going out to work and they are not living on the money that other people who work and pay income tax provide.

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When we look at the commitment that our Premier has made to helping children with problems, I mention again the breakfast program. We have 350 of these programs in the province today. Something like 35,000 children are now being given breakfast who were never given breakfast in the last 10 years by either of those governments. Neither of the two previous governments ever solved the poverty problems of those families and those children. They did not do anything to help those families in crisis.

**Ms Lankin:** They didn't have welfare rates cut by that government either. It didn't cut incomes and put children into poverty.

**The Chair:** Order.

**Mrs Marland:** I don't really think I need to shout over someone who doesn't have the floor, Mr Chair.

It was really very interesting when the member for Sault Ste Marie started to say these people — "we live in communities on a year-round basis," he said a few minutes ago. I don't think any of us really understood what he meant by that. At that point he was in the middle of criticizing my colleague the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. He said: "This minister is never in Ontario. He's never been to northern Ontario." I'm sure if I were to come in this House tomorrow and bring the itinerary of Mr Saunderson, the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, you would

be amazed to find just exactly how many communities in Ontario he has been in in the last two years and how many plants, businesses and industries he's opened in Ontario, particularly in the last six or eight months.

We actually had a very interesting experience in Mississauga last Thursday morning when our Premier opened a third addition to the Glaxo Wellcome plant in north Mississauga. What I found particularly interesting at this opening — apart from the fact that it was very exciting to see this new R&D addition plus their wonderful, unique way of storing their product in a sterile, automated warehouse — one of the most interesting things was that the Liberal member of the federal government from Brampton, Colleen Beaumier, was there speaking on behalf of the federal government. She was congratulating Glaxo Wellcome, of course, and she was saying that all this is happening because of — guess what? — NAFTA.

Here was a Liberal member of the federal government speaking in favour of the expansion of this international company, Glaxo Wellcome, and all the benefits of NAFTA. I thought, "Isn't it interesting?" Because when the Liberals were in opposition in the federal House all they ever did was criticize NAFTA and now that it's working —

**The Chair:** The member for Mississauga South, we're dealing with section 1 of Bill 129 and you're completely off the topic, completely off.

**Mrs Marland:** I'm responding to the fact that the previous speaker was allowed to speak on why the minister —

**The Chair:** The debate is on section 1. I think you understand that.

**Mrs Marland:** When the member for Sault Ste Marie was talking about the minister —

**The Chair:** No, no. I'm not dealing with the member for Sault Ste Marie; I'm dealing with you.

**Mrs Marland:** All right. I just hope you give me the same rules under which he was allowed to speak.

I will come back to section 1. I simply say that when the member for Sault Ste Marie was criticizing what our government has done, he talked about the lack of commitment by our Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. That minister, through his policies and his commitment to improve employment through the creation of jobs in this province — and everything that he has done overseas has been to increase the number of jobs on the home market. Whether he's in Japan or Europe or Latin America, he is over there selling Ontario.

**Mr Len Wood:** He was out of Ontario. He was nowhere to be seen. You should be ashamed of yourself. You're trying to protect him.

**The Chair:** The member for Mississauga South, take your seat, please. The member for Cochrane North —

**Mr Len Wood:** Well, she agitates me something terrible, Mr Chair.

**The Chair:** No, no. Please. The member for Mississauga South.

**Mrs Marland:** I'm sorry I agitate my colleague across the floor, the member for Cochrane North, to use his own words, "something terrible." I'm sorry that I agitate you something terrible. If it's so bad, you could adjourn to



your lobby and turn the television off and then you wouldn't have to be subjected to this. I'm simply putting on the record —

**The Chair:** Section 1 of Bill 129.

**Mrs Marland:** Thank you. I'm speaking to section 1 of Bill 129.

**The Chair:** No, you're not at the moment.

**Mrs Marland:** I will say that the reason we are able to make the tax cuts work in this province is because this minister, along with the other members of our current cabinet, has worked very hard in implementing policies in this province that do create jobs, that do now show a benefit in our economy. Why do we think that our economy is finally recovering? Why do we think we have had an increase of 1,000 jobs per day for the last three months? Not government jobs, I would say very quickly, but government-created jobs, jobs created by the policies of this government. The way government should create jobs is through its policies, not by spending taxpayers' money to create work that simply is paid for by government.

Frankly, I'm just so grateful we're finally on the road to recovery, that our economy is finally showing a turnaround.

**Ms Lankin:** On a point of order, Mr Chair: I am concerned that the member for Mississauga South is attempting to speak to section 1 of the bill but that a number of her colleagues aren't here to listen. Would you check and see if there's a quorum?

**The Chair:** Would you please verify if we have quorum.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Chair.

*The Chair ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Chair.

**The Chair:** The member for Mississauga South.

**Mrs Marland:** In debating section 1 of Bill 129 tonight we've had some interesting debate. We even had the member for Sault Ste Marie holding up overheads. I've seen people read letters, I've seen people read the bill at times and I've seen people read previous Hansards, but this is the first time in my 12 years I've ever seen anybody stand up and read overheads.

**Mr Gerretsen:** So what?

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**Mrs Marland:** It's interesting, because if this section of this bill is so important, as I believe it is, I think it warrants debate where the preparation has been a sincere commitment to making sure that the facts are before the public.

In this bill, and particularly in this section, when we're talking about the financial policies of our government and why they're working, I really believe that while we're doing that we have to accept one thing, that the opposition will never agree with what we're doing, because frankly what we're doing is so exciting because it's working.

For the first time in a whole decade, which is 10 years, we now have a job-growth situation in this province, we now have an economy that is recovering.

**Ms Lankin:** It is not true. The first time in 10 years? Get your facts straight. Take a look at 1994.

**Mrs Marland:** You know, Frances, if you speak next, I'm going to get up and —

**The Chair:** Member for Mississauga South, address the Chair. Just ignore the interjections.

**Mrs Marland:** But it's hard to hear.

**The Chair:** Just address the Chair. That's all I'm asking you.

**Mrs Marland:** Okay. I'll ignore the interjections, and since we know interjections are out of order, I know you're going to remind them of that so I can concentrate.

**The Chair:** Just talk on section 1 of Bill 129. Don't worry about the rest.

**Mrs Marland:** It's very hard to concentrate with so many interjections.

I feel that the policy of our government that is very clearly laid out in this bill is one which, whether or not the opposition agrees with it today, will be proved to have been the right policy at the right time in the history of this province. It is very apparent to those of us who understand what the policy is about and what the bill in fact —

**Mr Gerretsen:** Why don't you start governing for all of the people, then?

**The Chair:** Member for Kingston and The Islands.

**Mrs Marland:** I really find that this kind of debate proves the futility of evening sittings. It's an absolute waste of time to have evening sittings. That's why I would suggest, with respect, Mr Chairman, that the revision of our standing orders, which hopefully we will get to eventually, will improve the level and quality of debate. Simply because this process right now is far too difficult and it's futile for me to continue, I'm going to relinquish the floor. Frankly, I have better things to do with my time.

**The Chair:** Further debate?

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** It's condescending and patronizing comments in this House that make it so frustrating sometimes. I understand what the previous speaker was saying about the financial policies of this province; I just don't agree with them, that's all.

When we speak of section 1 of Bill 129 and the tax implications, I am a little surprised that even the Premier agrees with them, because Mike Harris, when he was part of a Tory government, from 1981 to 1984, supported some 16 tax increases that amounted to \$1.8 billion. In fact he supported the single largest increase in personal income tax in the history of this province. That's why we have trouble believing what the great Taxfighter has to say today.

In any event, I'd like to get to something specific when it comes to the tax cut. Personal income tax for 1997-98, according to the budget, is going to be about \$2 billion lower than for 1996-97. That's the tax cut. I think, then, there's a direct relationship to the reductions in spending. I want to take a very few minutes to address in particular the \$177-million cut in community and social services. I appreciate very much that the minister is here this evening. In the few minutes I want to take I'm going to use an example.

In representing my constituents, I try not to bring some of the problems we have to the level of the Legislature because I think they can be solved outside the Legisla-



ture. But tonight I'd like the Minister of Community and Social Services to reflect for just a moment about the result of these tax cuts on Kimberly. I'm sure she knows who Kimberly is. Kimberly is a severely handicapped but cognitively bright girl. Since November 1995, I have brought this issue to the attention of the Minister of Community and Social Services. I've been working on this so long that quite frankly it's difficult for me to talk about it. The only reason I can think of that the minister hasn't reacted in a positive way is because of the cuts that have been caused by the tax cut.

I have here a memorandum that was sent to the Ministry of Community and Social Services in November 1995. It's endorsed by two ministry personnel, the administrator of the Southwestern Regional Centre as well as the area manager for the Ministry of Community and Social Services in Windsor. It says, "I've attached a submission for order in council on the abovementioned individual."

The sum total of this story about Kimberly is that a family that is trying to keep their child at home and care for this child can't afford it.

I'll read you the last sentence of this document that was sent to the ministry by these two ministry personnel. It says, "The total benefit would be \$730 monthly, in addition to the \$375 basic entitlement they are currently receiving from handicapped children's benefits."

I'm not going to speak much longer on this because, as I say —

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Mr Crozier:** Somebody says, "Hear, hear." You don't like to hear this kind of thing, do you? The tax cut is going to benefit the better off in this province, but when somebody brings one single story to you that they've been working on for a year and a half, you really don't want to hear about it. I'm not going to prolong it. You don't have to listen very long, because nobody has listened to Kimberly's story up till now.

The only excuse they can give is, "There isn't enough money." Well, damn it, I don't care. If somebody goes into the hospital and they're diagnosed as having acute appendicitis, you take it out. They don't say, "The hospital doesn't have enough money." The doctor doesn't say, "I'm over my cap." They take it out because it's acute.

We have an acute situation here with a family, recommended by people in the ministry that it be handled in a special way, and all we get is an answer that essentially says, "We don't have enough money." It doesn't matter whether it's acute. "We just don't have enough money."

The letter simply ends up saying that if the family has any further questions, they can contact the administrator of the Southwestern Regional Centre. The Southwestern Regional Centre administrator recommended that this be a special case. I only bring it to your attention because you can reduce the taxes of not only the most wealthy but the middle class in Ontario, you can reduce the amount of funding the Ministry of Community and Social Services has because you have to pay for those reductions in taxes, and then you simply can say to those who have an acute need, "We don't have enough money." See the area manager and they'll tell you the same thing.

That's it. That's all I have to say. The cut in income taxes has caused a cut in services, and it has caused a cut in services to the point where even an acute case can't get help. I think that's sad.

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**The Chair:** Further debate?

**Ms Lankin:** I would like to ask a number of questions of the parliamentary assistant with respect to section 1 of the act. If I could begin, I'm reflecting on some of the comments by the member for Mississauga South, which she called Basic Economics 101. I was actually quite shocked to hear some of the propositions she put forward with respect to how the economy is best stimulated.

I begin by asking the parliamentary assistant if she is familiar with the studies that the Ministry of Finance has with respect to what kinds of taxes are the most stimulative. In particular, I'm interested in whether those kinds of targeted tax cuts that return money to the pockets of taxpayers who are of lower income might be more stimulative than those which return large amounts of money to the more wealthy in our province. I wondered if you could tell me your familiarity with the tax-modelling systems the Ministry of Finance has with respect to that.

**The Chair:** Please go ahead.

**Ms Lankin:** Actually, I'm waiting for the response to that question, if that's okay.

**The Chair:** Just take your seat, and then I'll ask the member for St Andrew-St Patrick if she wishes to respond.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I was waiting for the member for Beaches-Woodbine to sit down before I stood up, since you have been keeping order so well, Mr Chair.

I'm really not that familiar with tax-modelling systems as part of the tax policy branch. I would not be as familiar as you, not having spent as many years as you have in government. However, it's certainly an interesting area to pursue, and following your question, I will pursue it.

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate the frank answer from the parliamentary assistant. Let me suggest to you that in the time I spent as a member of treasury board and in discussions around the cabinet table when we looked at tax policy, I recall very well being informed by people within the tax policy branch of the Ministry of Treasury and Economics, as it was at that time, the Ministry of Finance now, that targeted tax cuts, those that provided money to those who perhaps would immediately spend it — I'm talking about lower-income, middle-income people — were of a more stimulative value than money that would go to higher-income people.

I guess the theory behind that is that you might see someone who is in a higher income bracket have sufficient disposable income now to buy most of the basic needs they have for themselves and their families, and perhaps many of the luxury items, and any additional moneys coming back to them may well go into investments or into purchase of luxury items that are not manufactured here in Canada, so that there's an awful lot of leakage — the tax officials refer to that — of that money; it doesn't come back immediately into the economy.

I wondered next if you could answer a question for me. The member from Muskoka, when he was in your



seat for a short period of time, responded to a question. He gave some percentages with respect to your tax cut and the proportion of that tax cut that is going to people who are below \$60,000 a year. I wondered if you could please repeat that. I didn't catch the exact percentage he alluded to and it would be helpful in terms of the next questions I have if you could provide me with that information.

**Ms Bassett:** First of all, in terms of the breakdown of the percentages of where the tax cuts are going, certainly every taxpayer is going to get a tax cut, every taxpayer with less than \$60,000 of income will get a tax cut of 30% or greater. Taxpayers with low incomes get the largest percentage tax cut, but the top 10%, which so many members tonight have been referring to, will get an average tax cut of less than 30% due to the Fair Share health levy.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** What are the absolute dollars?

**Mr Gerretsen:** Could you give us some amounts?

**Ms Bassett:** We figure that you can work out, with your computer, the absolute dollars. The majority of the tax cuts go to the middle-income areas. That's where it's thrust. Only 0.5% of the population of tax earners are in the top percentage group.

**Mr Gerretsen:** How much of the money are they getting?

**Ms Lankin:** I'm sure that the parliamentary assistant will have a dollar value of the overall cost of the tax cuts to the government treasury. That must have been part of the research that would have been done that would have been presented to cabinet. I'm talking about this in its simplest form, may I say to the parliamentary assistant.

Absent what you're projecting may or may not happen in the economy, there is a certain cost per tax point, and I'd be interested in knowing what that top 5% that you're saying, which is getting the smallest amount of the tax cut, I wondered if you could tell me in absolute dollar terms how much is going to that highest income bracket.

**Ms Bassett:** I'll get that for you very shortly. If you want to go on with your next question, I'll just look it up. I want to get as close as possible.

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate that. I think we get to the heart of the issue here. The parliamentary assistant has said that only 5% of the population make this very, very high income. But we know that the tax cut that is being provided is being provided across the board on what is a progressive tax, the personal income tax. We do know that even with your Fair Share health levy, those people at the highest incomes are going to be receiving considerably more money in terms of dollars.

I'd like you to move away from percentages for a moment because that inadvertently leads the public to a conclusion that I think would be an erroneous conclusion about what's actually occurring here. Talking about dollars, would you not agree with me that someone who is earning over \$250,000, or even over \$100,000 a year, is going to get back significantly more dollars in this tax cut than someone who is earning \$35,000 or \$40,000 a year?

**Ms Bassett:** In the progressive tax system, as the member for Beaches-Woodbine knows, the person who

earns more naturally ends up paying a lot more. When we've been talking tonight — and I haven't been jumping up to point out — the percentage that various members have been throwing back, that those people who earn a great deal of money are going to benefit more in dollar value, if you earn a huge amount of money, even if you're getting a smaller percentage than somebody who earns a very little bit of money, comparatively speaking, the dollar value, as one of your members, I think from Algoma, pointed out, and that's true, will naturally be more.

I think that's something we're not arguing, but what nobody has mentioned is that high-earning people, after all that is said and done, pay huge income taxes. What we're talking about in the tax cut, it's just a slight bit off that amount. They're still paying huge amounts of taxes which people with little incomes are not, or relatively small, I should say.

**Ms Lankin:** Again, I appreciate the frankness of the parliamentary assistant because on many occasions in this House, when we have tried to get to that exact point, I've heard many of your ministers and others, and members who are talking to bills, respond and always talk about the percentage points and not admit the very clear fact that those people who are higher income, under your tax scheme, your tax cut, even with the Fair Share health levy, the change, are going to be getting back considerably more dollars than people of a moderate income or a low income.

You say that's natural because that's a progressive tax system, but surely you must realize then that your income tax cut is one of a regressive nature, because you are squeezing the taxation level.

2200

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** No, it's not, it's progressive with the fair share health.

**Ms Lankin:** Here we go. As soon as we have a debate about these points, you can see that the chorus starts.

My question to you is, if you acknowledge that those people, whether or not you think that's the right thing to do, pay more taxes so you think they should get more dollars back in the cut, if we have established that, the tax modelling indicates that the most stimulative kind of tax cut is that kind of a tax cut which puts more dollars in low- and moderate-income, working people's hands and not the wealthy.

How do you justify this as a stimulative value? Please don't listen to the member who has just sat down beside you because I can assure you his answer will be wrong. I'd much rather hear yours.

**Ms Bassett:** First of all, what I would have to say is when you say the tax modelling systems are more stimulative, that's what you say. As I admitted in the first question, I have not seen those. I will go and look into the tax modelling system. So on the basis of what you say, I can't comment because I don't know that those tax modelling systems are more stimulative or not.

In terms of the kind of progressive tax system that we have in place and the tax cuts that we feel are stimulative, that is a justifiable difference of opinion. Just as many economists would agree that tax cuts such as the



ones we are introducing are stimulative to the economy as those who do not, and we can't solve that debate here, obviously. So that really answers —

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate that the parliamentary assistant is going to get that information and table it and provide it to us, because I do think it is important, as we appear in the last stages of dealing with this bill, that we have that information.

I accept that you have not seen the tax modelling systems I'm referring to, and I assure you that they do exist and that they are there within your Ministry of Finance.

I would also say to you that I didn't suggest that there were people who would say a tax cut is not stimulative at all. I did not suggest that. I was talking about what is the most stimulative kind of tax cut.

But I think one of the things all economists would agree with is that accompanying a tax cut, and I would agree a tax cut is stimulative — we can debate what's the best method of pursuing that; I'd rather see something on the sales tax side, but put that aside for a moment — if we can agree that there is a stimulative value of a tax cut, what most economists would say is that if you have to pay for that, however, by borrowing money for a longer period of time, because you're not going to balance your budget as quickly as the previous budget plan that had been there would've balanced the budget, there's a tradeoff you pay in terms of the economy.

I was wondering, can you confirm for me that in fact the deficit will not be balanced, the budget will not be balanced as early as the original budget plan had been, that you've changed that, that you've extended it out for two years, and that we will be borrowing more money for another two years towards the deficit as a result of your overall economic policy?

**Ms Bassett:** I can say to the member for Beaches-Woodbine that I feel the deficit is going to be balanced. It'll be eliminated 2000-01. That's on target, as we predicted, and in terms of —

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** It will be ahead of time.

**Ms Bassett:** It could be ahead of time, although I think right now we're planning on 2000-01, if you look at what the finance minister said, and in terms of the borrowing down the road, we feel the economy is better because we're managing our debt. If you talk to the money people in the States, where we're borrowing money, we're making better deals all the time as various bonds become due. We think that's going to offset — and it's a value judgement. We think it's working. I think all the people say, even Standard and Poor's and Dominion Bond Rating — although they didn't change, as somebody pointed out, our rating this time, they acknowledged that it takes two years to turn around from a lower rating and bring it up, and they acknowledged that we are going in the right direction. Each company has said that very, very strongly. The managing of the deficit we are doing: There's no question they think we're doing things correctly.

**Ms Lankin:** In fact the budget plan I was referring to would have seen the budget being balanced by the year 1999-2000. You've now confirmed, which we knew from

the budget plan, that your government's plan pushes that out a year. It takes a year longer to balance the deficit as a result of the tax cut. You're saying you think that's worth it and you've made reference to Standard and Poor's and Moody's and the Dominion Bond Rating agency. Let me indicate to you that while they want to see progress being made on the deficit, and they acknowledge progress is being made on the deficit, they are saying they think that is jeopardized by proceeding with your tax cut as quickly as you have. They have all indicated concerns about that.

The other thing I would put to you is that in order to achieve this tax cut and to balance the budget at the same time, you know that you have to achieve a certain amount of government expenditure reduction, which your government has been engaged in. You know, as a result of that, that there are a number of jobs that have been eliminated in the direct public service and in the broader public service, and that when those people are out of work and are not paying into the local economies and are insecure and not making purchases, there would be an economic drag. Could you tell me how you have figured that economic drag into your overall picture, and don't you think in some ways that's a bit counterproductive? I guess the question is, can you afford the tax cut if you're putting people out of work in order to achieve it?

**Ms Bassett:** First of all, we obviously feel it is better to be going in the direction we are going in. In terms of the economic drag caused as the result of terminating some employees, the fact that we are downsizing government — I think it's universally agreed that every province is overgoverned, certainly Ontario has too many employees, and we had to restructure. We couldn't afford to be doing things the way we were. So then, if you look at a number of employees and what happens to them, a lot of them disappear through attrition and over the course of five years their contracts or their time of employment would be ending. Other ones who are let go, which could be seen as a drag, are getting back into the workforce. In fact we all know people who have left the government willingly, or maybe unwillingly or whatever, who have landed themselves in very good and exciting jobs — some of them are earning even more money — and then there are some other people, and I acknowledge it, it was unfortunate, who have not been re-employed as yet.

The bottom line, to answer your question, is that I feel overall we're going to be better off and several economists have predicted that economic drag has ended, pretty well.

**Ms Lankin:** I must say, with respect to the parliamentary assistant, that's a bit of a Utopian viewpoint. First of all, we're not talking about some employees having lost their jobs; we're talking about thousands across the direct Ontario public service and the broader public sector, many of them not, as you said, people who are on contract who came to the end of their contract and were going to be leaving anyway, many who have been laid off. Those are real people with real families to support, and I can tell you from my own constituency and from my contacts in my past life in the broader public sector that many of those people have not landed those nice, exciting jobs you've talked about.



The very fact that we're going through restructuring in a number of the areas in the broader public sector in which the layoffs have not yet occurred, but we know they're coming, I think suggests that maybe you're incorrect that the economic drag is over. There's still a factor that is out there and if there's that sense of insecurity in those families and in those communities that are rocked by that sudden drop in jobs, thousands of jobs across the province, there's a real question about how — we come back to the member for Mississauga South and her economic theory that overall these more people are going to be working, people are going to be paying taxes and we'll be better off. If that were the end result, I think we would all agree in this House, but we haven't found that to be the end result so far. Unemployment rates are still very high in this province. People are very worried about job security.

We just went through a federal election in which we saw jobs on the public's mind — forget what the politicians were talking about — consistently, in polling, jobs were the top-of-the-mind issue. So it's not a problem that's going away.

You said something, sort of an assumption, that we're overgoverned and there were too many employees for what has to be done. I'd like to know if you could say — within the public service and perhaps within sections of the broader public sector if you don't know the overall number — we're overemployed, if that's a word, by how many? By what percentage? Overstaffed by what percentage? What would you say the appropriate level is? 2210

**Ms Bassett:** I can't go into that. I don't have a total in every single ministry.

In terms of being overgoverned, I said that for the money we have to spend, we can't afford to be carrying the number of employees we do. We have to look at doing government differently.

You were talking about the insecurity. I know about the insecurity that people feel, not just in the public sector. I came out of broadcasting where this kind of restructuring was going on five and six and seven years ago in broadcasting companies and other businesses, which had to restructure or they went under. All those employees, for months before they were let go, were living with the constant fear that they might be let go, and it did happen. For the last maybe 10 years we've seen a number of employees being let go and an insecurity — you could call in an economic drag — going on.

People are finding their feet. I know not everybody is going to. That's the human cost, and it's a tragedy. We hope as a government that we will be able to get the economy going well enough so there will be new jobs, we'll have money to retrain people to go into areas where perhaps there are those jobs. Believe me, that's what we are trying to do, although it may not be exactly the way in which you might have done it had you been in government. I understand that.

**Ms Lankin:** With respect, I say to the parliamentary assistant that you just indicated a number of words like "we hope" these people will find jobs where "perhaps" there are those jobs. There is a wish and a song behind some of what you have said, and that's not enough for a

government to provide to the people of the province with respect to jobs.

I'm sorry you don't have the numbers with respect to the level of public employment, because you did state that there were too many employees for the money we have. You made two statements there.

I might point out to you that when you came into government, the level of employment in the civil service had already been reduced significantly and had been reduced back to a level of what it had been a decade prior. Was it wrong a decade prior? Was it wrong when you came into office? Is it wrong today?

The other part of what you said is "for the money we have." I come back to the question, then why are you giving so much of it away? The tax cut, which we've established through discussion — I know you're going to check the economic modelling — is probably not the most stimulative kind of tax cut available, in that more of the dollars go to high-income people who are not going to immediately put it back into the economy, so there's a lot of leakage; it doesn't create the stimulation, doesn't create the jobs.

You've got to pay for it by having a deficit for a longer time, and that's made bond rating agencies a bit nervous because they'd like to see you deal with that problem first. You've also had to pay for it by substantially reducing government expenditures and laying off more people than you would have to if you didn't proceed with this tax policy at this time.

Given that it's not having the desired effect in terms of stimulation of the economy, I have to ask you why you wouldn't step back for a moment and take a look at the fact that you're creating economic drag, putting people out of work and they're not finding their way into those new, exciting jobs, and you're having to borrow money for a longer time to finance it.

**Ms Bassett:** Clearly I don't subscribe to what you say. I hear it. I'm firmly convinced that we have really turned the cusp and are into a period of economic growth. There's \$1.5 billion more that's being spent in the economy, consumer confidence is up, retail spending is up. People who, even five months ago, weren't spending are now beginning to spend.

You mentioned the wealthy people who are not going to spend their tax cut. People who are earning less money are spending that money because they've put off doing something; that \$400 or \$300, or whatever they happen to get, goes a long way, and they are spending it. That is beginning to show.

We hope, although it's not where we wanted to be — and I can't say it's going to happen, because then you would say, "Oh, you don't know it's going to happen." The signs show that this is the direction in which we are going. I would naturally hope and I think it is going to happen.

**Ms Lankin:** I'll wind up now by making a few comments. I appreciate the participation of the parliamentary secretary and for her frankness in answering my questions.

I find it difficult to understand when there's an acknowledgement that those wealthier Ontarians who are receiving the tax cut are not putting it right back into the



economy. There was an acknowledgement by the parliamentary assistant's comments just then that moderate- and lower-income Ontarians who are receiving the tax cuts are more likely to be spending them, that that goes a long way for them and into the economy. Yet she's refusing to take the next step and understand that a more targeted tax cut, therefore, one that included the poorest people in the province in terms of giving them more money — disposable income — would have more of a stimulative impact.

Let me talk about who those people are. The poorest people in the province are those who are on social assistance. What did this government do? This government cut their rates by over 20%; that was supporting families and children. Those are people who spend every penny they have. If you want to talk about stimulating the economy, it makes no sense to me to have taken that kind of percentage of money away from the poorest people in this province.

What we needed to do was to have the stimulation of the economy create the jobs, and then create the links for those people on social assistance with the jobs and help move them into those jobs. That would be the right way to approach this. That would be the way to try and ensure that families are kept whole and secure and that children aren't forced into poverty, and that would see a stimulation to the economy.

The parliamentary assistant talked about growth in the economy and talked about higher consumer confidence, talked about a greater sense of security. I can tell her that the people in the broader public sector — nurses right now, teachers right now, custodial workers in schools right now — those people are not feeling a sense of security. Those people in the broader public sector who are facing the prospect of layoffs are not feeling secure. They're not feeling like going out and buying the products you talked about.

To say we're seeing growth in our economy — the parliamentary assistant didn't say this; I want to be very fair. I've heard many of her colleagues attribute that to the policies of the Mike Harris government. When we know the booming US economy is driving an export market here, is creating good growth — and we're glad to see that — it's folly to suggest that's as a result of this government's policy. What we do know is that if we didn't have the economic drag we see as a result of the cuts in public expenditures and the loss of jobs in the public sector and what that does to local economies, we would see greater job growth as a result of the boom in the US and the boom in the export market.

I want to wrap up my comments by saying that while I appreciate the frankness of the parliamentary assistant, I believe there is room for some very considered debate about the wisdom of this tax policy. I would hope that rather than rushing through and finishing this up in terms of third reading in the next day or so, we would take some time to actually look at the impact and see whether there's a way to reorder the provincial fiscal situation that would address both reducing the deficit and balancing the budget in an earlier time frame, keeping people employed and at looking where targeted tax cuts could actually stimulate economic growth and the creation of jobs.

2220

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** C'est avec plaisir que je prends la parole afin de toucher des points qui portent à la confusion, qui taquinent un peu le public. La section 1 du projet de loi 129 porte à la confusion.

Quand je dis qu'elle porte à la confusion, la confusion que la députée de St Andrew-St Patrick a mentionnée tout à l'heure, on parle de 30 % de réduction. Lorsqu'on parle d'une réduction de 30 %, beaucoup de gens ont l'impression que les citoyens et citoyennes de l'Ontario vont recevoir une réduction de 30 % sur leur impôt personnel. Tout récemment j'ai reçu un appel d'un ami de Hawkesbury qui avait remis sa formule d'impôt. Il m'a dit, «Où est ma réduction de 30 % ?» Je lui ai répondu, «Ben, actuellement, nous n'avons pas 30 %. Nous sommes rendus à 11 %.» Mais il faudra faire le bon calcul. On n'est rendu qu'à 11 % dans le moment. On nous dit 15 % de l'autre côté mais nos calculs nous démontrent que c'est 11 %.

J'ai ici un rouage de calculs d'impôts qui m'a été présenté cet après-midi par la compagnie de comptables agréées Lafêche St-Jean. On m'a dit que, rendus le 1 janvier 1998, les Ontariens et Ontariennes auront reçu, pour une personne qui a un salaire de 29 000 \$ à 59 000 \$, une réduction moyenne de 2,36 % au total du montant d'impôt qu'il va payer. C'est pour ça que ça porte à la confusion. Lorsqu'on dit 30 % — aujourd'hui mon ami de Stormont, Dundas et Glengarry m'a dit 15 % — les calculs nous démontrent que c'est 11 % à date.

**L'hon M. Villeneuve :** Impôt personnel.

**M. Lalonde :** Impôt personnel, c'est bien ça, mais la députée de St Andrew-St Patrick nous dit 30 %.

Mais une chose que l'on devrait remarquer c'est que, en moyenne, la majorité des personnes, le plus grand nombre des Ontariens et Ontariennes, vont retirer les bénéfices de cette réduction d'impôt. Il faut se rappeler que, lorsque nous regardons la réduction d'impôt, pour évaluer la partie d'une personne qui a des revenus d'au-delà de 100 000 \$ par année, ça prend cinq personnes, en moyenne, Ontariens et Ontariennes, pour se rendre au montant de la personne qui gagne 100 000 \$.

On dit qu'en moyenne, au-delà de 20 % des travailleurs de l'Ontario gagnent 20 000 \$ et moins par année. Donc, ces personnes-là vont bénéficier, à compter du 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 1998, d'environ 300 \$ par année. Comparativement, 300 \$, cinq personnes, fait 1500 \$. Cinq personnes à 20 000 \$ par année, ça fait 100 000 \$, mais une personne qui gagne 100 000 \$ par année va bénéficier de 3432 \$ de réduction d'impôt. Où est la justice ? Ce n'est certainement pas en moyenne. C'est vrai que le plus grand nombre vont bénéficier, mais en argent non, c'est faux.

Je viens de mentionner qu'il va y avoir une différence de tout près de 2000 \$. Je regarde que, ici actuellement, une personne va bénéficier en moyenne, comme j'ai dit tout à l'heure, de 300 \$ par année, tout ça pour dire que ça va coûter, aux payeurs de taxes ontariens et ontariennes, en moyenne 5 \$ milliards par année d'emprunts pour bénéficier les hauts salariés de la province.

Nous regardons tout ce qui va être transféré, les responsabilités additionnelles. Qui va s'assurer à ce que



l'on puisse continuer à donner des services dans une communauté ? Ce sont les personnes à revenus moyens, les personnes à revenus faibles. Les personnes qui gagnent 100 000 \$ ou 200 000 \$ par année ne sont pas les personnes qui vont se servir des arénas, qui vont fréquenter les bibliothèques, les garderies. Ce ne sont pas eux qui vont bénéficier de tout ça. Donc, c'est le salaire moyen.

Mais on ne pourra pas se permettre de continuer. Les municipalités vont laisser tomber. Dimanche dernier j'étais à Vankleek Hill et on m'a dit que les Femmes de fermiers ne pourront plus fonctionner. Il y avait une rencontre de la province. Plus de 140 dames étaient présentes, et on nous a dit que maintenant la ville de Vankleek Hill va demander 100 \$ par réunion, parce qu'on doit charger un peu partout maintenant. Les municipalités ne peuvent plus se permettre d'offrir les salles gratuitement aux organismes locaux. Mais rappelez-vous que si les organismes locaux laissent tomber leurs activités, la municipalité est en difficulté. Lorsque je dis «en difficulté», ce sont eux qui, actuellement, vont pouvoir garantir que la continuité des services aux Boy Scouts, comme on les appelle, aux Guides, le hockey mineur, le baseball mineur et tout ça.

Un autre point que nous regardons : le gouvernement essaie d'aller chercher un montant de 5 \$ milliards que l'on dit qu'on va rembourser aux hauts salariés. On vient de nous annoncer jeudi dernier qu'on va transférer aux municipalités les routes. Dans Prescott et Russell on va nous transférer la route 17. On nous offre, c'est vrai, 2 912 000 \$ en compensation. Ça représente seulement 41 000 \$ du kilomètre. Actuellement, lorsqu'on regarde ça, seulement pour un travail majeur on est au-delà de 1 \$ million, pour un projet seulement.

Dans votre comté, Monsieur le député de Stormont, Dundas et Glengarry, la route 43, que deviendrat-elle ? Cela va être transféré à vos municipalités. Les avez-vous avertis, les représentants de ces municipalités, que le tout va être transféré ? Est-ce que le calcul a été fait de combien ça va coûter d'extra aux contribuables ? J'en ai déjà fait le calcul. Vous l'avez ici. Pour chacune des municipalités, l'honorable M. Villeneuve, je vais maintenant rentrer dans votre comté et faire le calcul pour Maxwell, Alexandria, Lancaster et tout ça et vous allez voir qu'en moyenne actuellement — en moyenne — une famille va payer une augmentation de taxes d'au-delà de 800 \$ par année, et tout ça avant qu'on nous fasse le transfert des routes, parce que le transfert des routes est tout récent ; c'est seulement depuis jeudi dernier.

Actuellement nous disons que nous créons au-delà de mille emplois par jour. On essaie de dire que c'est par la réduction d'impôts personnels qu'on va créer des emplois. Je crois que c'est faux. Lorsque j'ai dit tout à l'heure qu'une famille, en moyenne 20 % de la force ouvrière en Ontario, gagne moins de 20 000 \$ par année, ce n'est même pas assez pour venir faire un voyage à Toronto. Mais celui qui a fait 100 000 \$ va prendre le temps d'aller faire de belles vacances dans le sud avec les 3 432 \$ d'extra qu'il va avoir. Ça va payer ces deux semaines de vacances, mais nous, Ontariens, ne pouvons pas nous permettre ça avec un salaire de la sorte avec la réduction d'impôt.

On dit que ça va stimuler l'économie. Actuellement, heureusement que ce soit le fédéral qui a pu redonner la confiance aux Ontariens et Ontariennes. C'est le fédéral. Nous avons regardé et nous avons finalement réussi à réduire le déficit. Nous avons réussi à tenir les taux d'intérêt très bas. C'est ça qui stimule l'emploi ; c'est ça qui stimule vraiment les gens à continuer en affaires.

Lorsque je regarde, vous savez certainement, on en a longuement parlé — we spoke a long time about the fact that dumping on to the municipalities was going to cost a fortune. It was an average, at that time, of \$1,201 per family in Prescott and Russell. Now the government has come back after seeing my worksheet, and I have to say that after we sat down with the parliamentary secretary and some of the members, they said it was impossible to have an average increase of \$1,201 per family. Now we've decided to take over the whole of long-term-care services but we have thrown back to the municipalities half, 50%, of the school taxes. In Prescott and Russell alone that is going to represent \$13 million that we have to collect again, \$13.5 million to be exact, but it all depends on what this government is going to do. They will be the ones to create the mill rate on this.

Gentlemen, all these examples that I'm giving you at the present time are just to show that I don't think the government has sat down and looked it over before saying, "We will reduce personal income taxes," but they are continuing to cut down all the services. "We have decided to cut over \$1.3 million in health care; we have decided to cut \$125 million in the classrooms; we've decided to cut \$17 million from children's aid societies," and this will go on and on. In the end the government will recognize they don't have the funds to continue the services, and because of what? Because of this personal income tax reduction of 30%. I'm telling you it definitely is not the medium salary or the average salary of the people of Ontario that will be able to benefit from this.

Once again, the person who makes on average between \$30,000 to \$60,000 a year will benefit. They will benefit on average by \$851 a year. They'll have that tax break, but the person who only makes about \$20,000 a year will benefit by about \$300. Once again, this is not enough to leave Ottawa and come to Toronto by plane and return. They would have to stay here, but since you have 30% of the welfare right here in Toronto, probably the services will be there. In rural areas we don't have the services. The way this government is going, the services are going to be reduced once again.

2230

With what we are experiencing at the present time, I wonder whether we are going to need a minister at the MTO level, because you are transferring all the roads to the municipalities. They say for a budget of less than \$300 million we don't have a minister. The same goes for agricultural services, which will have less than \$300 million. Will there be a need to have ministers in those two ministries? I don't know.

**L'hon M. Villeneuve :** Va parler aux cultivateurs ; va écouter tes cultivateurs.

**M. Lalonde :** J'ai parlé à mes cultivateurs. Ils sont définitivement tellement nerveux. Nous avons commencé à couper les emplois un peu partout. Mais rappelez-vous



d'une chose : nous avons coupé les soins de santé dans les hôpitaux. Je me rappelle dernièrement une personne est venue me voir, un avocat est venu me voir, et il m'a dit, «Jean-Marc, il est grandement temps que le gouvernement coupe.» J'ai dit, «C'est vrai, mais attends ; une journée tu vas voir que tu vas être frappé.»

La semaine après la mère de cette personne-là était admise à l'hôpital. Elle a eu une opération et le lendemain on a dit, «Vous devez retourner chez vous.» Il est revenu chez et il m'a dit : «Jean-Marc, c'est impossible. C'est pour ça que j'embauche quelqu'un. Si elle demeure à l'hôpital dans une chambre privée, c'est 150 \$ par jour d'extra.» J'ai dit : «Toi, tu m'as dit la semaine passée que c'était grandement temps que le gouvernement coupe. Tu vois, aujourd'hui c'est toi qui est frappé.»

C'est la même chose pour toutes les personnes qui disent, «Il est grandement temps que le gouvernement donne ça au secteur privé,» mais on aura jamais les mêmes services lorsqu'on les donne tout au secteur privé. Jamais on aura le même service. C'est bien beau. On va réduire la personne qui fait 14 \$ de l'heure et on va embaucher un autre à 8 \$ de l'heure, jusqu'au temps que cela frappe les personnes. Les gens du ministère des Transports, de la Santé, les gens qui s'occupent de la jeunesse, on coupe les emplois de tout ça et on essaie de donner ça au secteur privé.

Je vais terminer sur cette note : on doit regarder le tout. Les municipalités ne savent pas ce qui s'en vient. Elles ont dit, «l'AMO nous supporte avec toutes les coupures.» C'est peut-être vrai qu'ils les supportent, mais elles n'ont pas vu les derniers chiffres.

Je me rappelle que lorsqu'on a discuté du projet de loi 98, ils nous ont dit, «Ben, on va le charger aux développeurs.» C'est pas ça. Nous, les libéraux, nous sommes débattus afin que les 10 % que nous demandions aux municipalités ne soient pas permit. Ça a pris Hazel McCallion, la maire de Mississauga, de Kanata, de Oakville, pour dire : nous allons geler les projets, les développements. Nous avons finalement réalisé — » Mais même les trésoriers des municipalités ne savaient pas quel impact ça aurait sur leurs propres municipalités.

Les ambulances, maintenant : nous allons être obligés de mettre un compteur comme dans les taxis. Nous allons partir entre 103 \$ et 110 \$ lorsque nous allons mettre le pied dans l'ambulance. Pourquoi des réductions d'impôts de 30 % ? Nous devons aller chercher cet argent-là. Donc nous allons dire, «Maintenant les municipalités pour l'ambulance, vous allez payer 103 \$ pour embarquer, un piastre et 25 du kilomètre et 50 \$ d'attente à l'hôpital.» Les gens ne le savent pas, mais lorsqu'ils vont voir les factures, c'est seulement à compter du 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1998 que nous allons tous sentir cette réduction d'impôt-là et aussi le transfert aux municipalités.

Je pourrais en parler des heures, mais je crois que je devrais donner la chance à d'autres. Mais gare aux municipalités qui sont en faveur de ces 30 % ; gare à tous ceux qui sont en faveur de la réduction d'impôt personnel. Vous allez voir qu'un jour ils reviendront nous voir et ils vont nous dire : «Vous, les libéraux, on veut que vous continuiez à vous débattre pour gagner ce que nous méritons. Nous voulons retourner comme vous étiez

dans le passé afin de donner les services à toute la population.» Merci.

**The Chair:** Further debate?

**Mr Len Wood:** I have a few questions for the parliamentary assistant that I would like to get answered. I know other people have asked the questions and they haven't necessarily been answered.

Looking at a salary range between \$23,000 and \$28,000, I understand that with the tax cut as proposed, they would get back somewhere around \$450. Adding in the tax increase, especially in northern Ontario where everybody who owns a car is going to be taxed \$37 on their car — they're reducing the taxes on cars in Toronto and they're increasing them in northern Ontario — if you take the \$37 on every car, if a family has two cars, you're talking about \$75 for that.

With the fees people are paying on the increase in drugs, the seniors and the people on low income who have to pay for their drugs, there are a lot of taxes that are being added on.

If you look at some communities like Sault Ste Marie and Kapuskasing and Cochrane and Hearst and some of these areas, with the northern subsidies being cut off, property taxes are going to increase by some between 10% and 15%; some communities are saying they'll have to increase property taxes by 40%.

How is somebody going to be better off with a 20% or 30% tax cut on their personal income tax and save \$450, if their costs, because of what Mike Harris and his cabinet and the government are doing to increase taxes — people are telling me who are in this bracket, and there are a lot of secretaries, caretakers and people who have a modest income of between \$20,000 and \$28,000 or \$30,000, that they're going to be a lot worse off.

They are a lot worse off now, even with the tax cut, with the user fees that are being put on. Most of the communities in northern Ontario, the municipalities have even had to stoop to the point of doubling the rates for parking meters, doubling the penalties if people don't put the 50 cents or the dollar into the parking meters.

All of these are tax increases. People are telling me that they're going to be worse off at the end than they are now with all the new — you can call them user fees; I call them tax increases. They're saying, "Mike Harris used to be the Taxfighter back when they were third-party status in Ontario." Now everything that was promised during the — and it's right here, Report of the Mike Harris "Northern Focus" Tour, all of the things that were promised. This booklet was produced in January 1995. Improve air service in northern Ontario: the result is it's shut down NorOntair, a government-run airline that was shut down as a result of that.

We've seen air fares from Kapuskasing to Toronto almost double in rates and the service is very bad. For example, if I want to travel from Kapuskasing to Toronto, I've got one flight at 6 o'clock at night, which means that I would have to leave home at 6 o'clock at night on Sunday night and spend the night over here and not be able to get home until the next night.

There are a lot of tax increases we don't hear the government talk about. They say, "People should pay for licence plates." There's not a single person I know of in



northern Ontario who is happy with the last budget, the tax they're putting on all the cars. They say to me: "What can you do about that? We're already paying 15 cents or 20 cents a litre more in gasoline tax and now they lower the licence plates in the city of Toronto and they increase them in northern Ontario."

When this report came out, a lot of people didn't believe it anyway, but they're throwing that back in my face. Now they're saying, "You should raise this in the House," that if there are — and this report was put together by Bill Murdoch, Leo Jordan, Al McLean, Ernie Eves, and it's signed by Mike Harris. That was only in January 1995.

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Almost everything they promised in here during the Common Sense Revolution — 725,000 new jobs would be created in the private sector. There are more people unemployed now and it's getting worse than it was before. Thousands of people are being thrown out of work.

The promise was made that health care services in northern Ontario would improve, and yet I can start all the way from the hospitals in Longlac, Hornepayne, Hearst, Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls, Cochrane, Moosonee; most of these hospitals had their budgets cut by up to 18%, which meant the hospitals had to close half of their beds and shut them down.

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** What are all these alternative plans for —

**Mr Len Wood:** I know if the member for Huron was up in northern Ontario, if she toured northern Ontario, she would agree that if you make a promise before the election and you break the promise, you probably should resign your seat.

They were talking about improving the highway construction; that was going to happen. This was the promise made by Mike Harris and his group that toured northern Ontario. As a result, we've seen not a penny of the money that was committed and budgeted for in 1995 being spent, and now in 1997 they're spending 1995 dollars on road construction. They ripped the roads up between Fauquier and Smooth Rock Falls last year, and the promise was that the money was there in the budget for putting in passing lanes. Now the passing lanes have been taken out of the budget and they're just patching up as best they can and paving over the top. This is money that was deferred from the 1995 budget till now.

There are a lot of questions that I'm sure the parliamentary assistant would be anxious to answer. If you're going to get a \$450 tax break in the category between \$23,000 and \$28,000, and you're going to have user fees and an increase in property taxes that are going to amount to \$500 or \$600 or \$700, people are justified in telling me they're worse off now than they were before the Conservative government was elected.

As well, most of the good-paying government jobs that were in northern Ontario have been taken out of Cochrane, taken out of New Liskeard, taken out of all the areas, and they've been moved down to Nipissing. Why would they move these jobs to Nipissing? Some people say it's because the Premier of Ontario lives in Nipissing and he's trying to bring the jobs from the small communities in northern Ontario and take them into North Bay; the other ones, he's going to privatize them.

When people are out promising they're going to make things better prior to an election and then they come and get elected with a majority government, and this is exactly what we have, and people are worse off now, they're saying, "Why would the government take money from the poor and give it to the rich?" If a person is making \$25,000 a year and is going to get a tax break of 30%, the money is a lot less than what a person who is making \$200,000 gets. I'm sure presidents of the large bank companies are happy, if they're making \$1 million a year and they're going to get a 30% tax break. But that's not going to do anything to create jobs.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** You taxed the poor when you were in government.

**Mr Len Wood:** The Minister of Energy is getting all excited, because he knows his plan is not working. The plan is failing, and failing badly, because there is more unemployment now and there's going to be more afterwards.

We know that some of the cabinet ministers get upset when we're pointing out the fact that people are worse off now, after two years of a Conservative government, than they were before, and they're getting worse all the time. There are more women and children out there at the soup kitchens and in poverty than there were before. It's kind of sad. They're justified in complaining. They're saying: "Why are they removing rent controls? Why are they going to allow the landlords to raise rents beyond our reach and we're going to be thrown out on the street?" A woman with two children who has modest rent now, with the controls being taken off, there's no way of assuring they're going to be able to stay in their own place.

Even the title of Bill 129, An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget, this is a bill that is like Robin Hood in reverse: They're taking money away from the poor and giving it to the rich and wealthy, who are not going to spend it in the province to create employment. We know that from what has been happening. As a matter of fact, even the ones on a modest income are going to be further behind than they were before because of the 30% tax break.

There's also another section in here under the Ontario Loan Act. It says the government is going to be authorized to borrow \$7.5 billion. Well, \$5 billion of that is to pay for the tax break, as well as all the other taxes they've increased. If you look at any municipality — right now there's a discussion taking place between the communities of Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing, Opatika, Fauquier and Moonbeam about amalgamation. There is a possibility, in the studies they have done locally, that they might save \$1 million. But to save that \$1 million, they have to lay off a lot of people, administrators, clerks, people who are living in the community, are employed in the community and are contributing. They're the ones who do all the volunteer work for raising funds for minor hockey and for all the different organizations out there. If you throw these people out of work, what's the community going to look like?



The situation for the public sector: The teachers are saying, there are rumours out there that the government wants to bring back the Legislature to deal with the teachers' collective bargaining, seniority rights and the amalgamation of school boards, that they want to deal with this in August, the same as they wanted to bring back the spring sitting of the Legislature in January, when in northern Ontario it's minus 40. We couldn't call a spring sitting in Kapuskasing in January when it's minus 40.

Everywhere we turn over the last two years there's an attack on the workers. I'm pleased to see Mr Fox is here. Why would a government encourage their member to bring in a resolution that is going to be another attack on the workers, which is going to be debated this coming Thursday, that "the government of Ontario should disallow the undemocratic requirement of mandatory fee collection by unions"?

Why would a Conservative government want to make another attack on the workers in this province and try to attack the unions? I hope all the backbenchers and even the cabinet ministers who are here tonight will stand up and say this is uncalled for. For the employers to collect dues and submit them to the union off the employee's paycheque, that's democratic.

What we see here is a member being forced by Mike Harris, I guess, to write up a resolution and bring it into the House. I'm sure it's not his own idea; it's got to be Mike Harris's attack on unions. It's very similar to when they brought in Bill 7, which was another attack on organized workers in this province.

We still haven't spent the money that is needed to get a public inquiry into the Ipperwash situation. What involvement did the Solicitor General, the Attorney General, the Minister of Natural Resources and the Premier have by changing the rules in midstream and saying that trespassers were going to be handled in a different way than they were?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** This is so far from Bill 129, you can't even dream.

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**Mr Len Wood:** It all comes back to section 1 of Bill 129. If you can go out and borrow \$7.5 billion in order to make sure there's a \$5-billion tax break, why are the aboriginal people being ignored? Go out and spend a bit of money and find out if the Premier was involved in direct orders at Ipperwash. Find out if the Solicitor General had control over the OPP and was calling the shots, or the Attorney General, or was it the Minister of Natural Resources? The night before the shooting took place in Ipperwash, he was on TV saying, "These people are trespassing; they will be removed." The next day they were shot and one person was beaten unconscious. These are the types of actions we've seen over the last two years from this Conservative government. I'm still waiting for answers from the parliamentary assistant.

If a person is getting \$450 in a tax break if they're between \$23,000 and \$28,000 a year and they're going to be charged by the Conservative government \$500 or \$600, which we have the facts to prove — some could go as high as \$800 if they own their own house, because the property taxes are going up — in your mind, are they

better off or are they worse off than they were two years ago before the Conservative government was elected?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair (Mrs Margaret Marland):** Order. I would like to point out to members that interjections are out of order. In fairness to the member who has the floor — the member for Cochrane North has the floor, so if we could desist from the interjections, it would make it easier for the Chair to hear the member.

**Ms Bassett:** I would like to answer the member for Cochrane North. I'm going to speak only on three of the many points. As you made your way from point to point, I focused on three. Then, since I've been told so many times as a member from the south not to be pontificating about what's going on up in the north, I'm going to turn it over to the member for Parry Sound to address some of the issues in the north.

Let's talk about the tax cuts, first of all. You've all heard tonight — we have gone over every single aspect of whether the tax cuts are stimulative or not stimulative. We believe — you do not believe, but we believe — that the tax cuts do stimulate the economy. They create jobs and they certainly build consumer confidence. If you look at the economy and you look at the figures, that is beginning to happen. At the risk of repeating myself, I can say that housing starts are up, consumer confidence is up. You know that, so we don't have to go into it. We've said it a million times.

As for your fears about what's going to happen in the municipalities in the north or in the south or anywhere in Ontario, there's no question that people are afraid of change; it's a very valid fear, because we don't know what's coming. AMO has sat down with the province and they have worked out what they will agree to. They will get an \$800-million restructuring fund and they are going to get a \$500-million reinvestment fund. There will also be savings that you will be able to find within the community by restructuring yourself, just as businesses everywhere have been restructuring and making savings by looking at doing things differently. I'm sure, given the ingenuity and spark and brains of so many mayors and town councils, they will be able to do that. Perhaps your fears are a little premature at this point.

As for user fees, that will be up to the municipalities to decide if they are going to charge or if they are not going to charge. Many questions have been answered in the House from different members over the years. Different cities have charged user fees for different things for years. That's something that will be a matter for the municipalities to decide.

Perhaps the member for Parry Sound would talk about the north so that somebody from the south will not be accused of pontificating.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I heard some of the remarks of the member for Cochrane North. I heard him alluding to the item in the budget that referred to charges for motor vehicle licences in northern Ontario.

I live in northern Ontario. I've lived in northern Ontario since I was 17 years of age, and as you can see, I'm well over that today. I do understand a little about the people in northern Ontario. As a newly elected mem-



ber in 1981, I fought for many years, with my own government, I might add, and with successive governments, to make sure my area of the province was included, for all provincial government ministry purposes, as part of northern Ontario, because people in that part of the province indeed always have regarded themselves as northerners.

My experience with northern people is that they are not looking for handouts from anybody. They are very enterprising, independent people. All they are asking for is that they get a fair shake.

What we did with respect to motor vehicle licences in the most recent budget was (a) to equalize, if you will, motor vehicle licence fees across southern Ontario, because they weren't equalized. They were far greater in Metro Toronto than they were in other places in southern Ontario. Quite frankly, that was not fair and that was not equitable. That is something I believe his government had something to do with, treating people differently in some regions of southern Ontario than they did in other regions in southern Ontario.

I fully appreciate the member for Cochrane North's comment. However, we also had an initiative in the budget that puts an additional \$200 million in highways in northern Ontario — totally unprecedented.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Over five years.

**Hon Mr Eves:** It's 200 million additional dollars over five years, yes, I say to the leader of the third party; \$200 million more over the next five years than your government ever dreamed of spending, on top of more money that we're already spending on highways in northern Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair:** Order. We are not having interjections. The member for Kingston and The Islands, the member for Cochrane North, we have decided that we are not having interjections. It is in the standing orders, and I'm going to enforce it.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Madam Chair, through you to the member for Cochrane North, yes, we do understand and appreciate that things cost more in northern Ontario with respect to transportation, everything from gasoline prices to the necessity to have some sort of motor vehicle transportation because, as you know, there are not the great public transit systems you have in many parts of southern Ontario.

That is why there is a recognition of that, and the cost is exactly one half of what it is in southern Ontario. But we have made an effort to spend a great deal more money in northern Ontario with respect to transportation.

**Mr Hampton:** That's not true.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I say to you, yes, we have. The figures are there in black and white. Not only are we spending in our base budget, for highways and roads in northern Ontario, more money than any previous government, including yours, has ever spent, but we are adding on to that an additional \$200 million over five years on top of that, almost a quarter of a billion dollars. I know you guys threw quarter-billion-dollar bills around like they were manhole covers. You people just spent more money

than you had, than the taxpayers of Ontario had, obviously.

But in spite of that, we are making a much greater commitment to the people of northern Ontario than you ever made. You also took money out of the northern Ontario heritage fund. You extracted it because you knew you were coming up to a provincial election and you needed the money, you wanted to make your books look better. You took their money away. We gave it back, with interest, I might add, to the people of northern Ontario.

If I were you, I don't think I would have the unmitigated gall to stand up in this Legislature, having stolen money from the northern Ontario heritage fund — your government took the money. They stole it. They stole it from the people of northern Ontario. We gave it back, plus interest.

**2300**

**Mr Len Wood:** You can't accuse anybody of being a thief in this House.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I am not accusing anybody. I said your government took the money —

**Mr Wildman:** You said "stole."

**Hon Mr Eves:** Stole the money from the people of northern Ontario. That's what they did; they took it away from them, without their consent.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair:** I would suggest —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Martin:** How much have you spent so far? How much have you spent in two years?

**The Acting Chair:** The member for Sault Ste Marie is out of order.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** We put it back.

**The Acting Chair:** The Minister of Agriculture is out of order.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair:** The member for Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** It's been over two years, Chair.

**The Acting Chair:** I have warned you —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gerretsen:** Come on, Chair, get some order here.

**The Acting Chair:** The member for Sault Ste Marie, I have named you twice. I am warning you. I am not going to tolerate this level of noise and disruption in the House, nor am I going to shout over the noise in this chamber. I say that to colleagues on both sides of this House. You are all out of order while you are interjecting.

Now, to get back to the point that was made by the Minister of Finance, I ask the Minister of Finance to reconsider the use of the word "stealing" or "stolen."

**Hon Mr Eves:** I would be more than pleased, Madam Chair, to withdraw the word "stolen." Perhaps what the previous government did was make an unethical withdrawal of money from the northern Ontario heritage fund and deposit it in the coffers of the Ministry of Revenue to make their books look better, because that's exactly what they did.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair:** I realize for all members, including some members who are not in their own seats, that it's 11



o'clock at night. It's been a very long day. But the use of imtemperate language on either side of the chamber is not conducive to good debate. I would respectfully ask from the chair that we caution ourselves in those words we choose to use. The standing orders also do not permit the imputing of motives by other members. If we could have regard to the standing orders, we would finish the remaining hour of this committee of the whole.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of order, Madam Chair: It's interesting that in your comments you just said it's not in order for a member of this House to impute motives of others or a party or to blatantly say to this House through this debate that the former government was unethical. In any other case, the Speaker would ask the minister to withdraw. He has not withdrawn. I ask you to do so.

**The Acting Chair:** I think we could probably make some progress if the Minister of Finance could withdraw that comment.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I'd be more than happy to withdraw any language which has offended the honourable members opposite, Madam Chair.

**The Acting Chair:** Has the Minister of Finance concluded?

**Hon Mr Eves:** No, I haven't. I couldn't help but also overhear the member for Cochrane North talking about tax cuts and how they cost money and how they have not proven to be effective. I might want to remind the honourable members opposite that since the government in power has instituted and initiated its initial portion of its tax cut, revenues in this province have gone up substantially; last fiscal year they went up in excess of \$1.2 billion. Tax revenues from all forms of taxation have gone up —

**Mr Bradley:** Gambling revenues.

**Hon Mr Eves:** No, I'm talking about taxation revenues, I say to the member for St Catharines. Taxation revenues have gone up by \$1.2 billion while tax rates have gone down.

**Mr Hampton:** Ernie, how much did you slide from 1995-96 to 1996-97?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The leader of the third party is commenting on how much of that money was money from a previous fiscal year. That's a very good point, because there's a very simple little lesson in finances here, in how the affairs, year to year, are run by the government of Ontario, no matter who has been in power since the province of Ontario has existed.

What happens every single year is that the federal government, which collects our income tax revenue, guesstimates how much money the province of Ontario is owed and pays us in regular instalments. Perhaps not too surprisingly, the federal government always underestimates the amount of money that's owed to the people of Ontario — or any other province, probably, for that matter, except for Quebec, which collects its own — and it gains the use of that money for a period of time. In this case they gained use of money going back to 1995, sat on it for two years; had the use of hundreds of millions of dollars of Ontario taxpayers' money for some two years. Every single year there is an adjustment, and I say to the honourable members opposite, there will be an adjust-

ment next year too. Trust me. There will be an adjustment next year that will increase the revenue from this year.

But even after you back all of that out, which was some \$742 million, I believe, if you take all that out, the revenues were still up well in excess of half a billion dollars. When next year's year-end comes and we get our proper share from the federal government, that \$500 million will be back up in the range of \$1 billion.

Revenues indeed are going up while tax rates are going down. I know that's something the two previous administrations totally fail to appreciate, because they raised taxes 33 times and 32 times in their respective five-year tenures in office. We have reduced taxes 30 times in our first 22 months in office and we are getting increased revenue.

You can't tax the people of Ontario to death. You can't tax them out of business forever. That's partly why firms were leaving here. That is partly why people find ways to circumvent the taxation system, because you have tax rates that are so high that you're really discouraging them from being honest, hardworking, taxpaying individuals.

It's a philosophy they totally disagree with — I will admit that and I recognize that fact — but in my opinion it also was a very foolish philosophy. You have to allow people to keep more of their money. This money does not belong to the government; it belongs to the people who earn it. Government takes what it needs to provide public services. Government has no money. Government does not create wealth. Private enterprise and hardworking individuals create wealth. That's the only way wealth is created under our system. It is not created by government. Government doesn't earn money; government extracts money from taxpayers to pay for certain public services. That is a very basic different philosophy between this side of the House and that side of the House, or at least most of that side of the House. There is a part over there that's not too bad.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** Darcy used to do this, but there was a reason at this hour of the night.

**Hon Mr Eves:** There isn't a reason in this case, other than to respond to the honourable member for Cochrane North. I haven't had an opportunity today to imbibe anything, including food, I might add, since this morning.

**Mr Bradley:** How do you define "morning"?

**Hon Mr Eves:** How do I define "morning"? This morning it was probably about 8 o'clock am; that's how I define morning.

I say to the member for Cochrane North, he will see again this year, even when we've implemented 22.4% of our personal income tax reduction in the province, that revenues from all sources of taxation will go up, and that is a very basic point. We don't care how they go up, why they go up, what particular tax they go up in. We have always said that if you allow taxpayers to keep more of their money, they will spend it. Whether they spend it buying goods and services, whether they spend it buying gasoline, whether they spend it on services that are taxed — provincial sales tax, gasoline tax, any other tax that the provincial government has — it doesn't really matter to us.



2310

What matters to us is that they are allowed to keep more of their own money. They invest that money and spend that money here in Ontario. It creates more employment, it creates more wealth. More people get a chance to work, more people pay taxes. It makes it easier to spread the burden all around and government has more money to spend for essential services like health care, education and community and social services. That's how the system is supposed to work.

**Mr Len Wood:** This has certainly generated a lot of questions that the parliamentary assistant wasn't able to answer so I'm glad that the Minister of Finance is going to stick around and answer some of the other questions that we're dealing with.

When you put \$5 into somebody's pocket, Minister of Finance, and you turn around and the same government takes \$10 out of the other pocket, they are worse off, and that's exactly what you are doing. You're giving the people between \$23,000 and \$28,000 a \$450 tax break and you're charging them about \$600 through increased property taxes, through licence fees for all the cars that they own — if they own one car, two cars or whatever — all of the other fees, property tax increases that you said.

I don't know if you were here earlier when I read out the names of the people who travelled the province and wrote out a report in January 1995, the report of the Mike Harris northern focus tour. Your name is in here along with Bill Murdoch, Leo Jordan and Al McLean, and you're saying that northerners are going to be better off with a Conservative government. The people are telling me, and that's through 80% of the land mass of the province, that they are worse off now and they know they're going to be worse off as time goes on than what they were before this Conservative government got elected, because when you're putting \$2 or \$3 into one pocket, you're taking \$5 or \$6 out of the other pockets. The people, and this covers a large majority of the population, who are making \$30,000 or less are worse off. Can you explain that to the people out there?

Highway construction, all the money that you cancelled for northern Ontario construction in 1995 and 1996: Now you're going to throw a few crumbs around and say, "We're going to pave a few roads here and there," but that's all money that was deferred from 1995, 1996, into 1997, so no wonder there's extra dollars that the government has because you did nothing for two years. Now you're going to spend a little bit of money because you know in 14 or 15 months you're going to have to go back and ask for another mandate. Either you pave it or you paint white lines on it and get ready for an election somewhere down the road.

Thank you, Chair. Those are my comments for now.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I am pleased to join in the debate here. I'm sure there will be a number of questions that arise from further scrutiny of the budget bill.

For those who were watching earlier today, I'm sure they're somewhat confused as to what actually is going on in this House. We had the member for Welland-Thorold spend probably three hours on his feet talking about absolutely everything under the sun except the

1997 budget bill. He talked about all sorts of pieces of legislation that have long since been passed, that have long since been implemented and, ironically, have long since started creating the kind of economic turnaround in Ontario that we envisaged when they were created.

When we look at this bill and the very significant impact it will have on the province once it's passed, we have to recognize that this is just the second step, the second step in a four-year plan that will see our government back to a budgetary surplus, that will see us back in a position to once again be able to make strategic investments that will guarantee the long-term security of our health and education systems, our transportation systems, and of course all the other services for which our government is responsible.

There is no doubt, as one goes through the numbers embodied in the text of the budget and in the text of the bill, that one has to be heartened by the extraordinary turnaround in this province in just the two short years since we were elected. When you see the bold initiatives that saw the ability of our government to have confidence that we could commit to a balanced budget by the year 2000-01, we are not only on track, we are \$1.2 billion ahead of our goal.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Madam Chair: I don't like to be picayune, but I understand last night the Speaker ruled that the member for Scarborough East should not wear a beeper on his belt.

**The Acting Chair:** It is my understanding that the Speaker did make —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Chair:** Excuse me, order. It's my understanding that the Speaker did make a ruling last night about the bringing in of beepers.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I —

**The Acting Chair:** Excuse me. I haven't finished.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you had.

**The Acting Chair:** There has been a ruling by the Speaker as recently as last night that the use of pagers or beepers in the House is not permitted.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I would never think to use a pager in this chamber and I appreciate the member opposite reminding us all of that important rule.

Back to the topic at hand. Clearly there could be no subject more important to the taxpayers of this province than how the government manages the dollars that it collects through a variety of means, income tax of course being the one that vexes us most every April, but of course on a daily basis the retail sales tax that's collected every time we go to the shops and the gas stations and, in some cases, even places providing services. We have the gasoline tax, we have the entertainment tax. There are any number of means through which the government derives the revenue it needs to fund the important services in this province.

I think it is worthy of note that this budget now brings to 33 the number of taxes we have eliminated or reduced in just two short years. I would remind everyone, including the members opposite, that coincidentally, halfway through our four-year term, we have now eliminated an equal number of taxes to what was increased in a five-year term by either the Liberals or the NDP during their



terms of office. At the rate we're going we're on track to have eliminated as many taxes in four years as they raised in 10 years.

In fact, the legacy those 65 tax increases left this province at the time of the election on June 8, 1995, was almost \$100 billion in debt, annual deficits of \$11.2 billion. Even former Premier Bob Rae had admitted that we had hit a tax wall, that the people of this province had reached the point where the various levels of government had picked their pockets clean; they had pushed them beyond the point where reasonable people believed they were getting fair returns from their government for the tax dollars that were submitted.

Isn't it interesting that at the same time we have cut those 33 taxes we have seen a return of prosperity in this province, a return of optimism, across all the sectors of our economy. Here in the GTA we've seen new housing starts increase by 54%. We have seen auto sales at record levels. We have seen retail sales as recently as last week reported to be up 7.2% this year, vastly outstripping an inflation rate that's still less than 2%. So in real dollars the retailers across this province, from the big stores down to the ma-and-pa variety stores, have seen a 5% growth in real dollars, and we're only halfway through the year.

We've seen any number of improvements in categories and one need look only at the incredible new investments in infrastructure by people building multi-unit apartments who are now convinced that our goal of a fair relationship between tenants and landlords will give them long-term protection and their ability to derive a fair return from that investment.

We've seen individuals in the industrial sector make absolutely incredible announcements in the last couple of weeks. You may recall that just two Fridays ago Nortel down in Ottawa announced the creation of 5,000 new jobs, 5,000 more industrial and clerical jobs. The significance of that is that we had to go all the way back in our research to the early 1960s and the passing of the auto pact to find the last time that any company in Ontario announced 5,000 jobs in one announcement.

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What a remarkable turnaround from a climate of pessimism and doom, which I might note the members opposite would love to perpetuate, to a scenario where almost every town, every city from one end of this province to another is seeing new growth and new investments in jobs. We're seeing everything from new office buildings in downtown Toronto to the construction of at least seven new condominium projects just on one stretch of Bay Street.

The interesting contrast there is that there wasn't a single construction crane in downtown Toronto after 1992. They were able to coast along, some in the development industry, before their pockets absolutely ran dry of money, before the previous government's onerous and vexatious taxation and regulation strategies bankrupted even the largest developers that were working in downtown Toronto. They eked out about two years into the NDP's term of office before the last construction crane came down. What a time of despair that must have been throughout the construction industry.

All capable carpenters and bricklayers and those in the forming industry and the steelworkers, how betrayed they must have felt at budgets and at taxation strategies that drove jobs and investment out of this province, that beggared everyone, that had an abiding commitment to protect those of lower income by making sure everyone was of lower income and then dealing fairly across the population.

That was a very different perspective from the one we're bringing forward in this budget bill, because our bill is based on a commitment that we should be affording equal opportunity. Whether it's in education, whether it's access to health care, whether it's investments in infrastructure, particularly our road system across this province, once the equal opportunity is there, we're confident that the entrepreneurial spirit and the historical ability of Ontarians to compete in a free and open marketplace with anyone else in this world will once again rise to the fore and will once again guarantee that we will put that lost decade behind us, that we will not burden our children and generations to come with a legacy of increasing debt and annual deficits.

We will not adopt philosophies that are diametrically opposed to those that every single individual and every owner of a small business knows just won't work in the real world. We believe that governments, just like businesses and just like individuals, must bring in at least as much money as they spend, otherwise it's called "bankruptcy." At the government level it may be only moral bankruptcy, but it is bankruptcy none the less. This budget takes another giant step forward in making sure that decade is long forgotten.

You know, there are a number of very significant innovations in this important piece of legislation, the investments we've made in improving health care in this province.

I had the opportunity just this past weekend to have a reunion of the individuals I went to elementary school with. It was an interesting experience to meet people I hadn't seen for 32 years and to meet the teachers who had given me the fine education I've always believed I had been blessed with growing up in the province of Ontario.

I asked them their perspective on the new investments we were making in education in this province. Without exception they agreed that we have in large measure guaranteed the kind of quality output, the kind of substantive and quantifiable investment in students that they knew back in the 1950s and 1960s and that they believed was an integral and critical reason why we had the kinds of successes among the graduates from our school system in those decades.

They were very frustrated in their latter years of teaching. All but one have retired and the last one is retiring next week. They indicated they had become frustrated over the last few years with the failure of the education system to recognize the evolving trends in our society, the evolving trends in employment. Surely there is nothing more important for the government than making sure the education we give to the children who are our clients in the schools equips them with the skills



they need for the jobs when they graduate, not the jobs when they started in the school system.

I think this budget, by investing in improvements in the educational system at the primary level, the secondary school level and in particular in the colleges and universities across this province, will guarantee that focus is returned, will guarantee that never again will the relative prosperity of a municipality determine the quality of education of any student in this province. For the first time in the history of this great province we will be able to give as surety to every parent that their children will have what it takes to compete at the world level when they graduate and head out into the workforce and compete for the jobs in the 21st century.

In health care, I guess one thing my English teacher, Mr Taylor, would have found very frustrating, had he the opportunity to sit in this chamber, was those who could use the word "cut" in the same sentence as "health care" since our government was elected two years ago. In this bill you will remember that despite the fact that we were elected with a commitment to spend \$17.4 billion — we guaranteed to preserve the spending on health care in this province at that awesome level. Despite the fact that that was our commitment, in our first budget bill that was increased by \$400 million to \$17.8 billion, and this budget goes even further and puts another \$700 million into the rebuilding, the re-engineering, the refocusing of our health care system so that we can ensure all Ontarians of something else: that they will have a health care system second to none in North America.

The day of simply building hospitals in an election year, the day of shying away from difficult choices because technology had outstripped previous governments' abilities to cope with change, those days are behind us. We have tackled some very difficult challenges in that re-engineering process and no doubt there are many more to come, but the bottom line is that the investment we are making in health care in this bill is an increase of \$1.1 billion over and above the amount of money that was being spent by the previous government.

I would remind you that this is in stark contrast to the commitment made by the Liberals during the election. They agreed that only \$17 billion was necessary, and I'm still waiting to hear where they would cut \$1.5 billion out of the health care budget we've proposed in order to meet their promise to the taxpayers. I doubt that day will ever come.

There are a number of strategic improvements to our economy that will undoubtedly accrue as a result of this important bill. One of them will be the renewed focus and investment in science and technology. We have created a \$3-billion research and development science and technology fund.

When we talk about Nortel, when we talk about the software companies that have sprung up in Toronto and in Silicon Valley North in the area around Ottawa, when we talk about the pharmaceutical companies — in fact just today Glaxo Wellcome in Mississauga opened a \$120-million expansion of their research and development facility. Just outside my riding in Scarborough Eli Lilly recently added an extraordinary new expansion to their research and development wing, creating another 60 jobs,

investing another \$40 million here in Ontario in high-tech jobs, in value-added production of the kinds of products that are relatively clean to produce, an extraordinarily high-value-added component, great export potential and play on the strategic advantage Ontario has always had in terms of our access to markets, our access to raw materials, our access to a quality workforce, and of course a great climate and many other positive factors.

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We heard just this morning that Freightliner had made a decision to close a truck plant in Tennessee and move all of that production up to St Catharines. I'm somewhat chagrined that the member for St Catharines —

**Mr Bradley:** What truck plant are you talking about? No truck plant in St Catharines.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Was it St Thomas? Forgive me. It's unfortunate that the members opposite don't seem to think that those jobs are important, don't seem to think that the announcements we're reading every day in the newspapers are exactly the sort of thing that presumably they would be boasting about were they on this side of the House. It must be very frustrating to those businesses that have made that investment, it must be very frustrating to their employees who have made that stake and moved to Ontario to be greeted this way by the official opposition and by the third party.

This bill recognizes the importance of finding even more investors like that. It finds the importance of rebuilding the optimism that the business community once had and will have again, and of course the optimism that we as individuals must have if we are going to continue to stimulate the retail sector, continue to stimulate new home construction, continue to stimulate the all-important automotive sector of our province, surely the cornerstone of Ontario's economy.

This budget makes important new investments in children and family. We're putting more money into child care than ever before in the history of this province. It makes new investments in safe communities. We're putting more money into any number of new programs that assist the police in developing proactive strategies and at the same time some that were mocked as being relatively minor because of their dollar value. One that comes to mind and which found great favour among our caucus was a \$5-million fund to pay for the tuition of dependants of any law enforcement officer who loses their life in the line of duty.

Quite frankly, it was a great frustration not just to us but I think to any reasonable Ontarian that far too often the criminals get better treatment and they get access to free university education while sitting in Kingston Penitentiary or at the former penitentiary for women in Kingston. We've all heard those stories, but at the same time the unfortunate children of police officers killed in the line of duty did not have that same access to benefits from this province. We recognized that need and we've made the investment to guarantee that never again will they be disadvantaged as a result of the kind of criminal act that robbed them of one of their parents.

A glance, a quick look at the tax revenue shows just how significant last year's budget was and I think bodes well for the impact of this year's budget. We heard at



some length from the finance minister himself that even when you factor in the tardiness of the federal Liberal government in terms of returning to Ontario the very moneys that are owed to it as a result of the methodology under which we remit our income taxes — and it's fine from their perspective that they take six months or a year, all that time saving themselves interest before they actually give us back the money which the province and its taxpayers are due.

But even over and above that amount, despite the fact that for nine months of our last fiscal year we had given the taxpayers of this province the benefit of the first round of the tax cut and for three months the second round, totalling 15% — and one would presumably have thought that would reduce the amount of income. It's very interesting and, much as it frustrates the members opposite, that made Ontario the 54th jurisdiction out of 54, to our knowledge, that has ever cut marginal tax rates and, as a result of those cuts, had an increase in the amount of tax revenue. Why? Because all of us took those tax savings and spent them in the corner store, spent them at the car dealership, spent them in buying a new home or new appliances for our existing home. Those dollars were spun through the economy, and any economist will tell you that every dollar has a spinoff benefit of four to five times once it's spent in the community. There is a demand for more people working in all those stores and car dealerships, and those people pay more tax.

There was another significant change as a result of that bill and this bill, and that is the attitude of those people who had hit the tax wall, those people who had, in whole or in part — and it's an unfortunate consequence of the actions of the previous two governments, but it has to be said — gone into the underground economy. It was one price if you wanted an invoice; it was a different price if you paid cash. One can almost be sympathetic to that action when the government takes so much that the next hour you work you're basically giving your money to the government. The perception, real or otherwise, was that there was just no benefit for people to participate in the income tax system.

The reality is that equation has changed, the risk-reward ratio has changed. This budget has announced two more significant reductions in income tax, two more reasons for anyone who was previously tempted to stray beyond the bounds of the taxation system to recognize their responsibilities; and, quite frankly, at the same time the employment of more auditors at the Ministry of Finance who are collecting, on average, \$600 an hour when they go out and do their audits.

**Mr Wildman:** Oh, that's not what they're getting paid?

**Mr Gilchrist:** No, that's not what they're getting paid. They're getting paid about \$25 an hour. That's our idea of how the taxpayers can profit, by guaranteeing that when we hired — and we did — close to 200 new auditors, their income in that case is 24 times what it's costing us to pay them, a staggering return.

That's the reality. Not only are more people working, not only are more people paying tax, but more people are accurately and comprehensively declaring the income

they may have already been earning. I think that bodes well for how this bill will be received.

You'll also find that there were a number of other very important sectoral changes.

We have improved the exemption for R&D equipment.

We have eliminated the land transfer tax for non-residents of Ontario, which was an extraordinarily discriminatory tactic that ensured that in particular the cottage areas in this province did not see an accurate demand reflected for their properties because we made it extraordinarily expensive for non-Ontarians to invest in a new cottage or buy an existing one and improve it. We didn't think that was fair. We would hope to be treated as an equal if an Ontarian were to buy a cottage in Manitoba or in Quebec, or even on the other side of the Canadian-American border, and we don't think it's appropriate that we set a different standard for those who want to invest in our province.

Already you may have heard, and I know my colleague from Muskoka has recounted a number of statistics to me, that the enthusiasm of the real estate agents in Muskoka almost knows no bounds. They have any number of new clients who have made inquiries or have already consummated purchases of cottages, and that bodes well for the construction business in that part of the province.

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We have put in a number of initiatives that assist the agricultural sector. Perhaps the most notable of those was the elimination of the retail sales tax on all materials purchased for any expansion or renovation of a farm property. As the co-owner of a family farm, I can tell you that it is a reality of life in the country that fences need to be replaced, that barns wear out. The reality is that for far too long farmers in this province, who have been eking out a relatively meagre existence in many if not most cases, have found that this measure has allowed them to make those improvements, make those reinvestments in their farm and regain some optimism about the future of staying in that important sector of our economy.

I know the Minister of Agriculture is always keen to remind us that agriculture is the second-largest industry in Ontario and certainly an industry to which we want to make sure that not just lip-service is paid, which was the standard treatment by previous governments, but that real, tangible benefits be the hallmark of our treatment in the budget and our business relationships with them.

We made a significant enhancement to the Ontario film and television tax credit. I don't think anyone who has visited Toronto and spent more than a day driving its streets would be surprised to know that the movie and television industry is an absolutely extraordinary component of the economic development that has gone on in Toronto over the last number of years. In fact, we're known as Hollywood North, such is the extent of the number of films and television programs which are produced in our great city.

We've recognized that and we've put in place some very dramatic improvements to the tax treatment for those who want to invest in those films and television programs. For qualifying labour expenditures, I know that the television and film tax credit will be increased to 20%, and the annual limit will be increased from \$2



million to \$3 million. We're going to make sure that anyone who has been giving only limited attention to Toronto as a result of the arbitrary level that had been set and the maximum tax credit they could claim — we've now increased that by 50%.

In addition, we've given first-time producers the ability to get an additional 30% off the first \$240,000 of qualifying labour expenditures. I can tell you that the arts community across Toronto and across Ontario was very quick to recognize this as a very significant benefit to fledgling filmmakers and producers who want to get their start in that industry, want to get their foot in the door, as it were, and want to demonstrate their creativity. We've made sure that they now have far less of a financial barrier facing them in their quest for recognition of their talents.

We've also put in place a book-publishing tax credit. I think this is very important, because there have been any number of accusations in the course of the library act and many other initiatives our government has brought forward that somehow we are not sympathetic to Canadian authors. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I think this bill proves that in spades. We are going to give a tax credit of 30% of the pre-production and promotional costs and 15% of the promotional costs. That's more than one seventh of the cost of printing a book.

That means that a would-be publisher can either increase the run and guarantee a wider distribution of their first efforts or, conversely, if they have limited resources in pursuing their first attempt at authorship, we've made sure it's that much more feasible for them to enter that business. I think the recognition by authors and book publishers across this great province was proof positive of the need for this initiative and the favour it has garnered in that important sector of our economy.

One of the other things in last year's budget that found great favour — there's no doubt we can quantify just how interested Ontarians were in an aspect of last year's budget that we are continuing in here — was the cooperative education tax credit that we introduced to offset the cost of tuition for eligible lower-income university and college entrants. Last year in our budget we had speculated that that program, which would have seen the government put in one dollar for every dollar that was contributed by someone in the private sector, might attract a total of \$100 million. You can imagine our absolute delight when we saw that volunteers and the hardworking people in the recruitment and fund-raising offices of the universities and colleges across this province brought in dollars that were in excess of \$250 million, two and a half times our own enthusiastic forecast.

Clearly it proved a number of things: first, that we were right when we thought the people in this province want to join with us in making that investment in quality education. They want to join with us in a commitment that no one in Ontario should use the cost of an education as a barrier for pursuing that worthy goal. Quite frankly, it proved as well to the educational community just how committed we were to those strategic, focused reinvestments in such an important aspect of our economy.

That tax credit has been continued for colleges and the bottom line is that the \$35 million the colleges raised last

year was one of the greatest surprises, because most colleges traditionally had not done any fund-raising, or very limited, so while the universities saw a dramatic increase, they at least had an existing base on which to work. For the colleges it was an absolutely remarkable windfall, and without exception they have recognized that new contribution, they have recognized the importance of this program and they have congratulated the government for the perpetuation of the credit in this year's budget for the community colleges all across Ontario.

It's very important to recognize that as you go through all the various aspects of this bill, the incentives we've given the banks to increase their investments and their loans to small businesses across Ontario clearly have had a dramatic impact. We've seen every one of the banks now put in place far more creative and far less onerous small business lines of credit.

We've done a number of things to make sure the tax system is fair: We've improved the objections and appeals process. We've improved the methodology the ministry itself uses to process tax remittances. Taxpayers will be able to pursue by far faster and more efficient means any appeals they might have to the original assessment. We think that's important and in keeping with an initiative that so far has seen this government eliminate 1,500 fees and regulations as part of our red tape initiative.

This budget goes one step further in making sure that whether it's a private citizen or a small business or a large business, the burden of doing business, the burden of living in Ontario and dealing with the government, should be as light as possible. Our goal will be to pursue that elimination of red tape to the point that there is no other jurisdiction in North America that can boast more ready and more friendly access to their government.

We've made a number of other important amendments in here, some very technical. I wouldn't presume to do justice to them in the limited few minutes we have here before the end of debate tonight, but I would note that a budget bill like this is extraordinarily complex. This is just an overview, and it runs to 186 pages. Attached to that was a supplementary book that all Ontarians are more than welcome to request.

We probably should note that all the initiatives the government undertakes are available on the Internet. You'll be able to get full information. In fact in this case, for electronic copies of the budget documents we've been talking about all day today, people would be invited to dial in at [www.gov.on.ca/fin/hmpage.html](http://www.gov.on.ca/fin/hmpage.html).

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Clearly, when one looks back in the past — and I'm sure one doesn't have to be in the printing business to know that there's a fair expense to publish a book such as the synopsis of the budget here or the accompanying budget papers. Each book would run well over \$1 in terms of its printing cost. We've recognized the ability and the need to utilize new technologies as they become available, so this budget bill is available through the Internet, as is, to the best of my knowledge, every piece of legislation our government has introduced in the last two years.



That guarantees that someone in any portion of this province watching tonight need not rely on the rhetoric from either side of this House. They have the ability to download all the information, to deal with it at their own convenience. Should they see things in there that warrant further questions or further explanation, certainly they will have the ability in a far more informed manner to couch those questions to the Ministry of Finance. Their comments and questions and reactions to this budget are welcome, of course, as are submissions to any piece of legislation we bring forward.

I would be remiss in not noting a number of other things this budget boasted. First off, as is the case in any budget document, when you dial in on the Internet and download from it or you go to your local MPP or the government of Ontario bookstore and pick up a copy of this book, you'll find any number of financial tables and graphs.

It's very frustrating and far too frequent that in this House we hear a suggestion that the government is hiding behind a veil of secrecy in the persecution of its efforts, that it's somehow not as open and accessible to the people of this province who on June 8, 1995, ratified the Common Sense Revolution and sent us on our way to rebuild this province. I would suggest to those who make that suggestion that simply looking through the page after page of very detailed information in this budget would produce a very different conclusion.

Speaking of conclusions —

**Ms Lankin:** We'll find one soon.

**Mr Gilchrist:** We'll find one soon indeed. I'd just like to draw everyone's attention very quickly to one very interesting line on page 63. Personal income tax — again, I think I have to end on this note. The suggestion is that it doesn't matter whether it's education or health or anything else, the change as a result of the tax cut; the bottom line is that personal income tax in this province increased by \$715 million last year. On that note I'd like to conclude.

I move that the committee rise and report.

**The Acting Chair:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The committee of the whole House begs to report progress and asks for leave to sit again.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

*House in committee of the whole.*

**The Acting Chair (Mrs Margaret Marland):** Questions and comments? If so, to which section?

Shall sections 1 through 54 carry? Carried.

Shall the schedule carry? Carried.

Shall the title carry?

All those in favour?

Those opposed?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the title carried.

Shall the bill carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the bill carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move that the committee rise and report.

**The Acting Chair:** The government House leader has moved that the committee rise and report. All in favour? Agreed.

The committee of the whole House begs to report one bill without amendments and asks for leave to sit again.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

**Hon David Johnson:** Madam Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to deal with third reading of Bill 129.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** I move third reading of Bill 129.

**The Acting Speaker:** Shall the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## HOUSE SITTING

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 6(a), when the House adjourns on Thursday, June 26, 1997, it stand adjourned until Monday, August 18, 1997, which date commences the fall sessional period.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** Any debate?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

That motion is carried.

It being 12 of the clock, this House will adjourn and sit again tomorrow at 1:30.

*The House adjourned at 0002.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller  
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
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Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
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Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	London North / -Nord	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)		Wood, Bob (PC)
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	London South / -Sud	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Don Mills	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Markham	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Middlesex	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamaria (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Baird, John R. (PC)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	Nepean	Maves, Bart (PC)
Eglinton	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b> (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme	Niagara Falls	Hudak, Tim (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Niagara South / -Sud	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nickel Belt	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Nipissing	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)		Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Norfolk	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Northumberland	Colle, Mike (L)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Oakville South / -Sud	Vacant
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)	Oakwood	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oriole	Patten, Richard (L)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Oshawa	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa Rideau	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)	Oxford	
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)		
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)		



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b> (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b> (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b> (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Vacant
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Turnbull, David (PC)
		York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk,  
David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross,  
Bob Wood, Terence H. Young  
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Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle,  
Bill Grimmer, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy,  
Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan,  
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E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young  
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Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten,  
Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum



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of Ontario**

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**Assemblée législative  
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Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 25 June 1997**

**Mercredi 25 juin 1997**



**Speaker**  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

**Président**  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

**Clerk**  
Claude L. DesRosiers

**Greffier**  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 juin 1997

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BREAST CANCER CONFERENCE

#### **Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):**

Next month, 650 delegates from more than 40 countries will arrive in Kingston for the first world conference on breast cancer. The July 13 to 17 conference will bring together for the first time breast cancer survivors, scientists, environmental groups, doctors and other health care professionals and activists in an effort to develop a strategy to combat one of the leading killers of women on this planet.

The statistics present a compelling case for the necessity of this conference. Worldwide, the incidence of breast cancer has risen by 26% since 1980. It is predicted that breast cancer will kill over one million women worldwide in the year 2000. In Canada, we have the second-highest rate of breast cancer in the world and it is the leading cause of death for Canadian women between the ages of 35 and 55. This year, 5,400 women in Canada and 46,000 in the United States will die from breast cancer.

There are few of us who have not been touched in some way by this horrible disease as it preys on our mothers, daughters and friends.

I want to congratulate the organizers, particularly Karen Weisbaum, the president, and Janet Collins, who conceived the idea, the volunteers and those who have contributed funds for their efforts over the past three years, in making this global event on such a crucial health care issue possible. It is a stunning achievement.

Queen's University and the greater Kingston area warmly welcome the participants and hopefully the sharing of scientific and medical information and personal experiences will contribute to an early cure for this dreaded disease.

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES REPORT

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I was remiss. I beg to inform the House I have today laid upon the table the Individual Members' Expenditures Report for the fiscal year 1996-97. The members will find a copy in their desks in the chamber.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** Recent studies have indicated that property taxes in northern Ontario would increase on an average of 40% as the result of the

downloading of services and costs to municipalities. In Sault Ste Marie, for example, the mayor says that the withdrawal of northern support grants would mean a loss of \$13 million for this community alone.

But I guess northerners should not be worried, because for the past two years Mike Harris has been consistently saying that he's only doing what he was elected to do.

I want to point out that I have here a copy of the Northern Focus Tour report, part of his platform that was issued in January 1995, which had some encouraging words for northerners, words like: "A Mike Harris government will work closely with northern municipalities to forge a new and better working relationship. As part of the new relationship, we will end the downloading of services to the municipal level...."

If the people of northern Ontario are not happy, then they can let the government know that things have to change. Remember these encouraging words from Mike Harris, and I want to quote again from the Northern Focus: "Northerners are fed up with dictates from Queen's Park. They're not interested in consultation without real listening, or promises without real action. Legislation must be tailored to suit conditions in the north...."

Could somebody please give the Premier a copy of Northern Focus? I think he must have lost his, because all we see is his dumping and downloading on to the municipalities and forcing property taxes up.

### EVENTS IN QUINTE

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** It is my pleasure to rise in the House today to personally invite each and every member of the Legislature to visit the beautiful riding of Quinte this summer.

The premier event of every summer in Quinte has to be, without a doubt, the Belleville Waterfront Festival and Folkorama. Sample ethnic food from every part of the globe. Take the kids for a ride on the midway. Enjoy live music, waterski shows, fireworks. This year's party runs July 11, 12 and 13.

The hottest street rod show in Canada comes to Trenton this July 4, 5 and 6 with the Canadian Street Rod Association's Canats '97. A wide range of vehicles will be on hand from street rods to new cars. This show will be a must for every car enthusiast.

Trenton has so much more to offer, including the 10th Annual Bathtub Days races and the RCAF Memorial Museum. The activities that take place in Quinte this summer are so numerous, I can't mention them all.

Whether you choose to rollerblade along the Bayshore Trail, sail the Bay of Quinte, shop the stores of historic downtown Belleville or visit the Hastings County Museum at Glanmore House, there is sure to be some



activity for every member of the family. So please come and join with me and many other people in Quinte county. We certainly want to welcome you this summer.

### TELEHEALTH

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** Earlier this year the Hospital for Sick Children and Thunder Bay Regional Hospital completed a one-year pilot project that allowed children to go into a room in Thunder Bay and, through videoconferencing, they were seen by a specialist in Toronto. The initial project, which was funded by the hospitals and various charitable groups, was a tremendous success. In its first year, Telehealth successfully served over 150 families in the Thunder Bay area alone.

This program clearly benefits a huge number of children in Ontario, but they now find themselves struggling to find the long-term funding needed to retain the necessary staff. Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout and Orillia already have Telehealth links. Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie, North Bay and Timmins have the technology but they lack the funding to hire the nurse who is essential in running the remote site.

Telehealth providers need enough funding to hire that nurse and to pay the phone line connection, but the Ministry of Health has yet to commit to this funding. At a time when this minister says he wants to find new and creative ways to enhance health care in Ontario, I urge him not to lose sight of this opportunity that will cost the province very little yet provide vital care for many of Ontario's sick children and their families.

By using this technology, families are not only spared the expense of travel and accommodation, but the sick children involved are spared the stress of a trip to Toronto when they are already very vulnerable.

I understand there is ongoing discussion between the ministry and the Telehealth providers and I implore the minister today to provide the necessary stable funding to allow this program to continue to serve children in my community and to expand across the province.

1340

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I rise to bring a message to the Minister of Labour. At lunch-hour I was speaking to a rally outside her office at the Ministry of Labour, with a large crowd of public sector workers and their supporters who are protesting this government's anti-democratic Bill 136.

I think it says a lot that on one of the hottest days we've had this year these workers cared enough about democracy — a lot more than this government does — that they were prepared to be out in the public and express their point of view.

Unfortunately, this government doesn't feel the same way about going out into the public. One only need look at what's happening with Bill 99, the attack on injured workers, the attack on WCB, where we're having the last afternoon of hearings here today at Queen's Park. This is a minister and a government that promised injured workers they would have full province-wide public

hearings. What did we get at the end of the day? Four half-days here at Queen's Park and a measly six days to try to cover the entire province. This government refuses to hold the meetings in a room big enough to accommodate all the injured workers who want to be there. They're spilling out into the hallways and other meeting rooms, and yet this government still refuses to extend the hearings.

On a day when we're also likely going to debate the rule changes, where this government is shutting down democracy even further, people in Ontario have all the proof they need that this government is the most anti-democratic we've ever had.

### PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** It's my privilege to rise in the House today on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Pakistan's independence and of Pakistan-Canada friendship.

As a result of the partition of India, Pakistan became an independent and sovereign state on August 14, 1947, and a republic within the Commonwealth on March 23, 1956, comprised of the two provinces of East Pakistan and West Pakistan.

Canada's close friendship with Pakistan has resulted in the signing of several important trade agreements, including agreements on education, culture and communications. In 1994, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and Punjab signed an agreement to become sister assemblies and so come into an even closer mutual cooperation.

Independence is truly a most valued gift. Freedom to live and work in the dynamic identity of our own culture, religion and way of life is one of the most powerfully positive experiences a people and an individual can ever have.

Pakistan's long relationship with Canada shows that the Pakistani people understand independence not simply as "freedom from," but even more importantly, as "freedom to": freedom to develop new international relationships, freedom to become economically and technologically advanced, freedom to begin a new journey of self-discovery and self-affirmation.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I congratulate all Canadians of Pakistani background, a number of whom join me in the House today on Pakistan Independence Day and in Pakistan-Canada friendship. May that friendship deepen and expand as Canadians of all backgrounds continue to work together to understand and love our particular traditions. Salam Alekum.

### ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE PRESS GALLERY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have just been handed an important news bulletin to share with members of the Legislature regarding the press gallery elections.

"Richard Brennan, Windsor Star, was elected president for the seventh consecutive year. The Badger credits his success to press gallery apathy and a lack of breathing challengers. He will not move into Stornoway, unless he becomes leader of the official opposition.



"James Rusk, *Globe and Mail*, was elected vice-president, print. Rusk, 87, ran on an anti-smoking, pro-violence ticket.

"Raj Ahluwalia, CBC Radio, was elected vice-president, broadcast. Ahluwalia, who asks the longest questions in the history of journalism, promises to be stern, if you don't mind.

"Bill Walker, *Toronto Star*, was elected treasurer because he can count past 10 and buys at least that many beverages for his thirsty associates on Fridays.

"Monica Kim, Global Television Network, was elected secretary. She won by a landslide by promising to keep Robert Fisher on a short leash."

The Queen's Park press gallery members know that by far the most important and far-reaching measure being forced upon the Ontario Legislature involves the procedural rule changes which will allow the Harris regime to bulldoze its legislation through our provincial Parliament in record time and with a minimum of debate, analysis and examination.

With the new press gallery executive in place, even if relegated to cubby-holes in the fifth-floor attic by Mike Harris, these draconian rule changes will receive intense scrutiny by our Queen's Park scribes.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** As the Chair, I would certainly offer my condolences to those people as well.

#### PAKISTAN INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Fifty years ago in 1947 the world saw the beginning of the end of colonialism. The first country to win its freedom and set the course for the rest of the world was Pakistan, when on August 14, 1947, it was declared an independent country. This year, as Pakistan celebrates its 50th anniversary of independence, I want to congratulate on behalf of our caucus all Canadians of Pakistani descent.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first south Asians to Canada, many from places now called Pakistan. Pakistani Canadians over these years have made an immense contribution to the socioeconomic and cultural life of Ontario and of Canada. From doctors to lawyers, entrepreneurs to social activists, trade unionists to business people, feminists to environmentalists, Pakistani Canadians have enriched our society in many ways. They bring to Canada a rich heritage of over 5,000 years of civilization originating in the ancient Indus Valley city of Mohenjo-Daro on one hand, and the Muslim religion on the other.

From the snow-peaked mountains of the Himalayas to the plains of Punjab and the delta of the Indus River in Sind, Pakistani Canadians have come to Ontario and have left an indelible mark in our society. Once again, on behalf of our leader Howard Hampton and all of the NDP caucus I want to congratulate all Canadians of Pakistani descent and thank them for the continuing contribution that they make to our society.

#### G.L. ROBERTS COLLEGIATE AND VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** It's with pleasure that I rise to address the House today regarding the 25th

anniversary and reunion of one of Oshawa's educational pillars, G.L. Roberts Collegiate and Vocational Institute.

This south Oshawa school was built 25 years ago to fulfil a need to prepare Oshawa's students for their futures, and G.L. Roberts has done this job admirably. G.L. Roberts was named after a prominent Oshawa educator, George Lake Roberts. Mr Roberts was a teacher, principal and superintendent with a strong commitment to educating Oshawa's youth.

The school has often become involved in innovative programs to offer increased educational opportunities for the students who attend the school. Currently, one such opportunity that G.L. Roberts offers is the Saturn camp. This several-day program offers students challenges in communication, group problem solving and the opportunity to set more personal goals.

This school has constantly sought to enhance the education of Oshawa students. As one of the community's cornerstones in south Oshawa, G.L. Roberts has a warm place in the hearts of many of its alumni. G.L. Roberts has done well with its first 25 years to prepare Oshawa's youth for their futures. The community support and dedicated faculty and staff of the school are committed to continuing the tradition of excellence in Oshawa's youngest high school.

I would like to congratulate and wish all of those who call G.L. Roberts Collegiate and Vocational Institute their alma mater a good reunion this weekend.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have in the Speaker's gallery today a Pakistani delegation headed by Mr Yusuf Shah, consul general of Pakistan, Mr Khalid Sarwar, representing the High Commissioner's office, and former member of the Pakistan Parliament, Prof Da Har Qadari. Please join me in welcoming these guests.

#### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a response from the Honourable Gregory Evans, Integrity Commissioner, to the request by the member for York South on whether the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had contravened the Members' Integrity Act.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** It was my understanding, Speaker, that the Premier would be in attendance, and I have a question for the Premier.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** The Premier will be here shortly, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Would you like to stand that question down?

**Mr McGuinty:** Yes, I would, Speaker. The second question as well.

**The Speaker:** Third party?



**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I as well have a question for the Premier, so I'd like to stand that down.

**The Speaker:** Then we go to third questions, official opposition. Restart the clock, please. Member for Sudbury.

#### MINISTRY OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT AND MINES SPENDING

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. We know, Minister, that your deputy minister doesn't like to work out of Sudbury, and we know that you don't like to come and visit Sudbury, and we know that you like to take Sudburians and commute them in a working mode to Toronto, and we know that this takes away opportunities for our Sudbury economy to grow, but enough is enough. 1350

Will you confirm to the House today that your ministry leased a house between May 8, 1996, and May 8, 1997, a house that just recently sold for \$500,000, a house at 13 Rathnelly Avenue for these travelling Sudburians, at a cost to the taxpayers of Ontario of \$3,100 a month and that the total lease amounted to \$37,200 last year? Will you confirm that that's what you paid on that lease?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** It's true that we spent the past year relocating eight staff positions back to Toronto. We confirmed this in the Legislature in May of last year. The positions were moved back to Toronto to strengthen the ministry's role in provincial decision-making, something we promised the ministry would do in A Voice for the North. During the past year we have allowed employees to travel back and forth while they relocated. This cost the ministry about \$135,000 last year, much less than the estimated \$250,000 cost due to some innovative measures, including the use of leased vehicles rather than rental cars.

I would add that moving employees to Sudbury and then having them frequently travel back to Toronto for the government's meetings is expensive. For example, during the NDP's years of 1994-95 travel costs from Sudbury to Toronto were \$480,000.

**Mr Bartolucci:** I think that's a yes, the lease was for \$37,200. I can't understand what this minister is thinking about. When over 60% of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines building is either vacant, used for storage space, used as dead space or used by other agencies, this minister thinks it's cheaper to relocate employees, at a cost of approximately half a million dollars, to Toronto.

Minister, will you confirm another example of your waste of taxpayers' money? With 60% of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines empty in Sudbury, not used by your ministry, did you spend \$369,000 to retrofit, to repair and to replenish your offices here in the Whitney Block?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** There are quite a number of allegations in that statement. First of all, let me assure the House that the ministry was downsized. We found it was more efficient as well as serving the north. People in the north told us they wanted to keep the front-line offices in

place. That meant that the NDO offices and the storefront operations in 29 small communities were not affected. Yes, we found some savings on the administrative side, which is located in Sudbury, so a downsizing took place there.

In Toronto, the Management Board realty corporation moved agriculture from a leased facility into Grenville Street. The MNDM building was moved to the fifth floor of the Whitney Block and there are relocation expenses. But over the government-wide initiative, that saved money, getting out of a leased building for the Ministry of Agriculture and moving them into a government-owned one.

#### HATE LITERATURE

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Attorney General. I want to ask you about the anti-Muslim hate literature that was handed out at Weston Collegiate over a week ago. As you know, the flyer is hateful towards Muslims and attacks Weston Collegiate for allowing Muslim students to pray on Fridays in the school auditorium. The flyer, and I hope you will agree with me, is absolutely despicable.

The Metro police hate crimes unit is ready to lay charges. The only reason that it hasn't laid charges is because you still have not given your consent, which is required under the Criminal Code. The Canadian Arab Federation and the Canadian Association for Islamic Relations held a press conference today. They are anxiously waiting for you to act. They are disturbed indeed by your government's lack of response.

Your government continues to deny the problems of racism, discrimination and prejudice that exist in our society. When incidents like this occur, and I would think that you above all ministers would be understanding of this, time is of the essence. It's in your hands, you've had enough time to respond. Why are you holding up the process?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I'd like to say that I treat these matters very seriously and with the utmost priority. When the police investigation that is apparently ongoing is completed and material is conveyed to me, which it has not been, I will immediately review that material, as I am obligated to do under the Criminal Code provisions. I will give this Legislature my undertaking that I will do so with the greatest dispatch. I can say that I have not had anything conveyed to me at this particular point in time.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Attorney General, the hate crimes unit has indicated that they're ready to lay charges. All they need is your approval. Just how long does it take you to get paperwork sent up four floors to your office, or has your infection of the family support plan and that inefficiency spread to the whole Ministry of the Attorney General?

Every hour that you delay expresses nothing less than condonation of this pernicious hatred that's exemplified in the pamphlet that you're well aware of. Why won't you, as Attorney General, use your authority? Two days ago, you promised you'd be reviewing this within hours.



It's now 48 hours later and you've done nothing. Your inaction does nothing other than express some implicit support for what took place in that high school. Tell us when you're going to instruct that paperwork to get to your office so you can rubber-stamp it and the police can do what they want to do.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I very much take issue with the allegation that has just been made that I in some way condone the kind of behaviour that the member makes reference to.

**Mr Kormos:** Two days after you promised. Completely intolerable.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I indicated the other day, and I was very clear, that within a matter of hours of the material being conveyed to me, I will review that material and I will do it in a way that is appropriate in order to make the decision that I may be asked to make. Certainly again my commitment will be that I will do this with dispatch, and when the investigation is completed and the material is provided to me, I will do what I'm obligated to do under the Criminal Code.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** My question is for the Solicitor General. Minister, as you may be aware, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics recently released a report on crime in Canada. Many of my constituents who are hunters and sportsmen have contacted me regarding this report. They're telling me that this report only confirms what law-abiding sportsmen have been saying all along, that they are not committing crimes and that the \$85-million federal firearms registry in Bill C-68 is a waste of taxpayers' money because it will not stop gun-related crimes.

Minister, do you agree and can you update the responsible firearms owners of this province as to the status of the constitutional challenge against this costly firearms registration?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** From the outset, we've expressed our concern that the registration provisions of C-68 represent a significant administrative burden and take police away from front-line policing responsibilities.

The government has analysed the data which clearly demonstrate that the proposed registration program for all firearms would not be effective in controlling crime. For instance, handguns have been required to be registered since the 1930s, but the fact is that only 10% of guns used in crime are registered. That means that 90% of handguns seized by police are not even registered and many are actually smuggled.

We know it's not legitimate, law-abiding firearms owners committing these crimes. That's why we have joined with the province of Alberta in its constitutional challenge of the registration provisions of C-68. On June 12 the Attorney General filed Ontario's factum in this case, and we expect it to proceed in the near future.

**Mr Ouellette:** It is encouraging to hear that Ontario is the voice of common sense in this matter. That centre for

justice statistics report contains statistics which state that only 2% of violent crimes involve a firearm. Clearly, the issue is not registration, but catching those criminals who use guns in the commission of crimes and smuggling. This is something responsible firearms owners, such as farmers and sportsmen, have said all along.

Can you assure my constituents and the people of Ontario that the government of Ontario's police services are taking steps to fight illegal weapons trade and smuggling which seem to be the source of the vast majority of guns used in crime?

1400

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I want to assure the member that the government is determined to make it tougher for smugglers, period. Whether criminals are trying to bring bootleg liquor into the province or illegal weapons, we are taking action to stop them. In April, I participated in a federal-provincial summit in Cornwall to examine ways to combat illegal firearms crossing our borders. As a result, we created a dedicated interagency unit to target the illegal importation, circulation and criminal use of firearms.

I can tell you that the provincial weapons enforcement unit has been very successful in combating illegal weapons. This year to date 60 weapons have been seized and 332 charges have been laid against 80 people. Some of these investigations have resulted in additional charges and seizures related to illegal drugs, explosives and pornography smuggling.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would it be appropriate to have a recess to give the Premier time to come into the House, since he's supposed to make a statement?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member for St Catharines, unanimous consent is always in order to recess. If you'd like to seek that, that's without a problem.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I expect the Premier at any moment now. I suggest we do another turn in the rotation. That would leave lots of time for the leaders' questions. If there's still a problem at that point in time, then yes, by all means, we'd have a recess to ensure that the questions would take place.

**The Speaker:** As far as I'm concerned then, we don't have unanimous consent to recess at this point in time. Let's continue. If it comes up again, I'll seek it at that time.

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Environment. Minister, we have been pressuring you over the last couple of weeks for some action on smog and pollution in Ontario. What we've heard is nothing more than hot air and rhetoric as to what you plan to do.

The reality is we have received a copy of Ontario's Smog Plan 1997, your long-awaited document that you haven't released, that you've been working on, and clearly what is astonishing is not what's in this document but what is not in this document. What we have seen



from this leaked document is nothing more than simply rhetoric and feel-good buzzwords about what you plan to do. There isn't any substantial action in reducing smog and pollution in this province.

You have set a time line in this document of 20 years. Do you believe it's acceptable that it's going to take this province 20 years to reduce emissions? You have made no reference to any emergency action smog plan. You have made no difference to vehicle emissions.

Minister, can you explain to the House how you can stand behind a document that clearly lacks any real initiative to deal with smog in Ontario? Frankly, you have failed the people of Ontario, failed this Legislature.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Environment and Energy):** First of all, I want to indicate to the member that the target which was set for 2015 was not set by this government, as I understand it. It was set by a previous government to reduce emissions by 45%, based on the 1990 level, by the year 2015. It was, as I understand it, set in conjunction with other environment ministers from across the country. It was based on scientific, technical advice and health standards. Therefore, I have picked up that particular challenge and am trying to forge towards doing that.

The member opposite has received the document, which is called Ontario's Smog Accord, which is only one of many elements in our attempt to deal with this particular problem. It is a new thrust which I would be glad to explain to the member in reply to his supplementary question.

**Mr Agostino:** The reality is that what this minister is doing and saying often equals the emissions that come out of the smokestacks across the province. Minister, you simply do not have the political clout in cabinet to get environmental changes through. We've seen that time and time again. We have seen it through vehicle emission testing. We've seen it through this long-awaited smog plan.

There's nothing in this plan. It is simply empty rhetoric and feel-good buzzwords. There's not one initiative in this plan that outlines how you're going to deal seriously with smog across Ontario. You talk about voluntary standards by companies. You talk about credit programs. You fail to acknowledge that you have to use the heavy hammer of government at times to go after polluters in Ontario. You've let them run free.

The reality is that policy in regard to environmental protection in Ontario is set in the boardrooms of this province rather than the cabinet room.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr Agostino:** When will you start protecting the interests of Ontarians' health and the environment and stop protecting the private sector and your corporate friends, who don't want any environmental —

**The Speaker:** Thank you very much.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I believe the member is looking at this document in isolation. This document is only one of many thrusts, as I told him before, to deal with smog in this province. I have, on a personal level, been in contact with more representatives of the United States, who are causing 50% of our problem, than any Minister of the

Environment has before me that I'm aware of. We have lowered the gasoline volatility this summer to reduce the threat of smog — the first government to ever do that.

We have set a PM-10 standard, a particulate standard, which no other government has ever done in this province before. We are revising 75 air quality standards, which no other government has done before.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We are seeking help from all the people of Ontario in a partnership to do additional things that are not required by law but will be put forward by them as their attempt to help us with —

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Minister.

I think we'll revert back to leaders' questions at this point in time, and we'll go with the leader of the official opposition.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Could we have unanimous consent to revert back to ministers' statements?

**The Speaker:** The Premier seeks unanimous consent to revert to ministry statements. Agreed? Agreed.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate the indulgence of the Legislature.

I want to rise today and respond to the report of the Integrity Commissioner with respect to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

As members of this House will know, our government established the Health Services Restructuring Commission in an effort to remove partisan politics from the necessary and difficult process of health care restructuring.

This commission was established as an independent body that could operate at arm's length from the government. In that spirit, several members of both sides of this House wrote to the commission on behalf of their constituents. Earlier this year, the issue of a minister writing to the commission was raised.

The Integrity Commissioner has found the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing acted in good faith and in the belief he was entitled to do so when he wrote to the commission.

Two other ministers, Mr Runciman and Ms Cunningham, have informed me they have also written to the Health Services Restructuring Commission. Both did so in the belief that they were entitled to do so. For example, Mr Runciman was of the view that he was expressing an opinion about an issue he believed to be outside the commission's mandate. None of the ministers believed the commission was a quasi-judicial body.

After setting up the arm's-length commission, the government delegated to it the government's authority to make restructuring decisions. It was our view that this mandate did not involve the adjudication of legal rights.

However, in his report today, the Integrity Commissioner wrote that he considers the Health Services Restructuring Commission not only to be independent but



also to be a quasi-judicial body. Therefore, we accept that the commissioner would also extend his opinion to the two other ministers as well.

There are many agencies and boards within the government. Some are clearly quasi-judicial in nature; others need clarification, particularly those recently established. The issue of what does or does not constitute a quasi-judicial body does need clarification. As well, all members need to know what is and what is not acceptable conduct, then, when dealing with these bodies.

Further, the role and conduct of ministers responsible for agencies such as the Health Services Restructuring Commission must be clarified. For example, the Integrity Commissioner himself says the minister could have personally consulted the Minister of Health on restructuring matters, instead of consulting the independent commission. Until now, we had been of the belief that that was inappropriate.

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I have therefore asked the Attorney General to meet with the Office of the Integrity Commissioner to clarify these issues for the benefit of all ministers and all members so that all of us know how and under what circumstances we can represent the interests of the constituents who elected us.

In the meantime, I would recommend that all members refrain from writing to the Health Services Restructuring Commission until we receive further clarification from the Attorney General.

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** There was an exceptional event that occurred in the history of this Legislature today: The Office of the Integrity Commissioner carefully reviewed the actions of one of Premier Harris's cabinet ministers and made a determination.

So that people outside this Legislature understand the Integrity Commissioner's function, he tells us, according to legislation that is in place, whether our activities are appropriate or inappropriate, he tells us whether what we are doing is acceptable or unacceptable and, more than anything else, he tells us whether we are acting according to the law or whether we are acting unlawfully.

I know the Premier uttered a statement a few moments ago which essentially does nothing to address the essence of the finding made today by the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner found that the minister, Al Leach, is in breach of the legislation that governs our behaviour. He said that the minister has broken the law. It seems to me that in those circumstances what the Premier should have done today is he should have stood in his place and said that he has asked for the resignation of the minister, and to that he should have added that he accepted that resignation.

Based on what he has just told this House, he should then have added that he asked for the resignation of Ms Cunningham and the resignation of Mr Runciman, because they too, in keeping with the finding laid out in this decision, are clearly in breach of the law. They have done something which is unacceptable, which is inappropriate and, most important of all, which is unlawful. That is very, very clear. What the Premier should have done is said that he senses that something fundamentally wrong

has happened, that he is not going to allow it to stand and that he is going to take the necessary steps to ensure that the consequences are felt so that all members of his government understand the seriousness of this matter.

The Premier would have us believe that there is some question here as to whether or not, from the government's perspective, this is indeed a quasi-judicial body that operates at arm's length. I suggest that he read the decision rendered by the Integrity Commissioner, where the Integrity Commissioner quotes the Minister of Health.

The Minister of Health is quoted by the Integrity Commissioner as making some of the following statements in this Legislature. At one time, the Minister of Health stood up and said, "The honourable member is well aware that a commission has been set up and that is, with respect to its decision-making processes and the decisions it would make, at arm's length from the government"; "that it will be at arm's length from the government, take the politics out and get these studies implemented."

The Minister of Health also said, and he's been very clear on this from the outset, "We are putting in place a system whereby a Health Services Restructuring Commission will be able to, at arm's length from government, use the authority and implement the restructuring reports as recommended." Throughout, usage of the phrase "at arm's length" has been employed by the Minister of Health. It has been perfectly clear, according to the Minister of Health, that this is an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body. But now the Premier tells us: "No, we want it both ways. We're not quite sure."

This government has been today hoisted on its own petard. If it is indeed an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body and the Integrity Commissioner has in fact made the finding that this minister is in breach of the law, that he has contravened the act that governs our behaviour in this Legislature, then you have no choice, Premier, but to stand up once again, tell us that you are going to ask for the resignation of Minister Al Leach, of Minister Cunningham and of Minister Runciman, because they have all clearly, in keeping with the words offered by the Minister of Health on numerous occasions in this House, broken the law. You have no choice.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Premier, I'd like you to listen to these words: "I think the Premier is going to want to continue to reflect today on the signal he is sending out on the standards, on what this is doing to the impression of all politicians by the public of this province."

Premier, those were your words, uttered on December 17, 1991, in this House. Today you have chosen not to live by those words, because if you had chosen to live by those words, you wouldn't be coming in this House telling us that you have asked the Attorney General to go and meet with the Integrity Commissioner to clarify something that the Integrity Commissioner has stated a very clear and definite position on.

I hope the same Attorney General will remember, when he has this meeting, what he also said back on April 28, 1992, on this issue: "I believe people should know right from wrong, and if someone transgresses, they should know that they should resign, or the Premier



should know, without needing something written down, to say, 'If you breach morality you're going to be out of the cabinet.' I believe that should happen without having enforceable rules because we should know better than that. We should be at a higher level."

Premier, there is no doubt in our minds that what you should have done today on the failure of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Solicitor General and the minister responsible for women's issues to resign — on the facts that you have stated today in your own statement, you have no choice but to request their resignation. You can't cut it both ways.

I will go this far, Premier, in saying to you that I actually believe there may be some room for a clarification of the rules or for at least a reclarification of the rules. The point is this: The rules, as they stand now, are interpreted on our collective behalf, and under which we have no flexibility, by the Integrity Commissioner. That's the system that we have in place. That's the system you accepted when you were on this side of the House. That's the system you accepted when you stepped over to that side of the House, up until today, when the tire hit the road, up until it was time for you to apply that common sense you've talked to us about, up until it was time for you to show that you respected the rules by which we work.

You can't continue to say, "Yes, those are the rules; we have to be held to a higher standard," and the minute it becomes your job as Premier to enforce those rules, you say, "Sorry, I want the rules clarified."

What you really mean, Premier, is you want the rules changed. You want to change the rules? Fine. Bring in some suggestions; we'll deal with them. But that won't change what's happened to this date. And what's happened to this date, Premier, is quite clear.

The report from the commissioner couldn't have been clearer. He called the minister's actions a "flagrant breach of parliamentary convention in that the HSRC was set up as an independent quasi-judicial tribunal to operate at arm's length from government." There is not even any area of dispute. There's not even any area of doubt about that. You may think that it's tough. You may think he is coming down hard. You may think he is really coming down heavily on your minister, on your ministers, you may think it is completely embarrassing for you to have to call for the resignation of not one but three of your ministers, but the sheer and undeniable reality is, Premier, you have no choice. You have no choice if you want anyone in this House and, more important, if you want anyone out there to believe at all that you have any respect left for the rules of this Parliament and for the rules of our system of governance.

1420

You cannot continue to flagrantly abuse the system you have inherited. If you want to make changes to the rules, we'll debate those changes. We may even be prepared to say that in some areas there is room for improvement and clarification. But until those changes happen, you quite frankly have no choice. The same standard you held us to when you were on this side of the House you have to apply when you're on that side of the House, because that's the price of sitting in that chair.

You can't re-create the rules as they suit you from opposition to government. You, Premier, and many of your ministers who sat on this side of the House were up on their feet time after time after time to remind us of that stark and sheer reality. Now it's up to you to remember that that reality also applies to Mike Harris. Mike Harris can't escape that reality, and you're doing your office a disservice as long as you continue to do that.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

(continued)

### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

#### **Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):**

My question is to the Premier. I wonder if you truly understand the significance of the statement you made here in this Legislature a few moments ago. It seems to me that you are so desperate to avoid the loss of not only one but three ministers today that — consider this — you are now telling all members of this Legislature that they should not be making overtures to your commission, which you put in place; that we cannot act in the interests of our constituents to speak to this commission, your commission, about the importance of hospitals to our communities. Do you understand how twisted that is? We're at a point now where, in an effort to avoid the loss of three of your ministers, you are telling us we can't act on behalf of the interests of our constituents. Is that really what you're telling us, Premier?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** No. What I'm telling you is that the Integrity Commissioner tabled the report today. I have accepted 100% of the recommendations of his report. I think the member for Dovercourt said that when I took on this office, I took on an obligation to live with the rules — I am living with those — and that I took on the obligation to live with the penalties. I am living with those.

I have accepted the report from the commissioner in its totality. I have accepted 100% of the recommendations of the Integrity Commissioner. I further am suggesting that I think additional clarification could be required, and until we have that clarification, I am advising certainly our members that they may wish to refrain from writing to the Health Services Restructuring Commission. That would be my advice.

**Mr McGuinty:** The report we obtained today leads us to one overwhelming, overriding conclusion: that the minister, Al Leach, is in breach of the legislation, that he has broken the law and that he should resign. Furthermore, based on what you have informed this House of today, we now understand that Mrs Cunningham and Mr Runciman, both ministers in your cabinet, have also broken the law. They too should resign. The ball is now in your court. You cannot escape from this one. You have no choice. You have no option whatsoever. Will you do the honourable thing and ask for their resignations?

**Hon Mr Harris:** You might want to be a little cautious that anybody has broken the law. What I have said is that the Integrity Commissioner has tabled a report. He



has recommended that I take certain actions, and I have taken all of them.

**Mr McGuinty:** What we're talking about here today, Premier, are your standards. Once again the ball is in your court. The Integrity Commissioner has considered this very, very carefully and taken a good deal of time to do so. His conclusion was that your minister broke the law — no ifs, ands or buts about that whatsoever. He broke the law that governs the behaviour of members of your cabinet, specifically dealing with an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body that you put in place.

You have no choice but today in this Legislature to tell us that in addition to Minister Leach's resignation, you're going to ask for and you're going to accept the resignation of Minister Cunningham and Minister Runciman. Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Harris:** What I have done — and I don't mind telling you that when I received the report of the Integrity Commissioner I was surprised, given the advice we had been given both legally and in Health, in the drafting of setting up the Health Services Restructuring Commission there. None the less, in spite of the fact that I was surprised and the minister and a number of us in government were surprised by that, I have taken the step to accept, completely and entirely, the advice we were given by the Integrity Commissioner.

What the Integrity Commissioner said, for the record, since you didn't want to put this part of his report in the record, was that the "action was an error in judgement." He said it was "based on his limited experience in government." He said it was "made in good faith in the mistaken belief he was entitled to do so." He said, "I recommend that no penalty be imposed."

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you understand full well that the Integrity Commissioner has no authority whatsoever in determining who sits in your cabinet and who does not. The ball is in your court. The judgement that's under close scrutiny here now is yours. We already understand about Mr Leach's judgement. That has been examined carefully and found to be wanting. Now your judgement is under scrutiny. We want to know what you are going to do in the face of this broken law under Ontario legislation.

We have a minister who has clearly and flagrantly broken Ontario law. That is the finding in the Integrity Commissioner's report. What we want to know here today is, what are the fallout consequences from that? Are you standing here and telling us that there is none?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Question, please.

**Mr McGuinty:** If that's what you're telling us, the consequences of this are negligible. They are nil in so far as your cabinet is concerned and in so far as your government members are concerned. Will you not ask for the resignation of those —

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I think the consequences are rather far-reaching, perhaps for other bodies that are set up that maybe members have not interpreted as being quasi-judicial as well. I think it's a very far-reaching decision and ruling. It could have implications for all of us, not just on executive council but for individual members as well.

Having said that, I have asked the Attorney General to seek advice or clarification on that directly with the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. Awaiting that advice, I'll be pleased to share that advice certainly with the members of cabinet. I'm happy to share with all members of the House. I'll share it with my caucus. If you choose to ignore it, you can do so. But I think it's fair that we have that advice from the Attorney General and from the Integrity Commissioner.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, what you are effectively saying today in your statement is that you are not satisfied with the Integrity Commissioner's report. You are not satisfied with it. You are not prepared to accept it and its implications. You're trying to get around it now.

1430

I just can't understand this. We've got a case in point here where the minister has been seen to interfere in a quasi-judicial, arm's-length body, and now we're going to have the Attorney General begin to exercise interference on the part of this government in terms of the office of the Integrity Commissioner.

The findings here are perfectly clear. The minister is in breach of the law; so are the other two whose names you identified for us in this House a few moments ago. You have no option. You've got to ask for their resignations. If they don't give them to you, then you've got to fire them. It's as simple as that. Will you do that, Premier?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Quite contrary to what the member is alleging, I am satisfied with the report of the commissioner. In fact I go further, to seek further clarification to see what implications this may have in other areas.

I suggest to you that it appears to me that the leader of the official opposition does not accept the report of the Integrity Commissioner, you do not accept the advice of the Integrity Commissioner, and you are asking me to overrule the recommendations of the Integrity Commissioner. If you're asking me will I ignore the advice, will I ignore the Integrity Commissioner, no I will not. I have accepted his advice and his recommendations lock, stock and barrel.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, just to make it perfectly clear and to avoid the necessity of the Attorney General getting involved in this, I want to read for you a copy of a letter dated May 27 of this year directed by the Integrity Commissioner to Pat Hoy, a member of my caucus. Mr Hoy was inquiring as to whether or not it was appropriate for a backbencher to make overtures to the hospital restructuring commission. This is what the Integrity Commissioner said:

"As Mr Hoy is a backbencher, it is my opinion that the letter is appropriate, being an activity under section 5 of the Members' Integrity Act, and does not place Mr Hoy in contravention of the act."

End of story, Premier. We don't have to worry about backbenchers now.

Let's come back to what this report is all about, what the conclusion is all about. It's about your minister being in breach of the act. It's about, now that we understand the full implications of this, two other ministers clearly being in breach of the act. You have no option, Premier. You cannot wriggle out from under this one. You have



been hoisted on your own petard. This is an arm's-length, quasi-judicial body. You've got to ask for and demand the resignation of your three ministers.

**Hon Mr Harris:** We are accepting the report and the recommendations. But let me tell you that we have legal opinion that, for example, backbench members ought not to write to a judge —

*Interjections.*

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** It's in contempt of everybody, the Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order, please.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have been given advice as a backbench member on dealing with judicial and quasi-judicial bodies as I understood them in the past. I have been given advice that certain things were no-nos for backbench members to write to such bodies.

Clearly, there are some letters that are appropriate, but there are some that I think would not be. If you do not want the wisdom of seeking that clarification for the future, that's fine. I think it is incumbent and I am suggesting to all of my caucus that we might want to seek that wisdom, we might want to seek that advice.

In the meantime on the case before us, I not only have accepted the Integrity Commissioner's report, I have accepted his recommendations and advice too.

**The Speaker:** New question, member for Dovercourt.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** My question is to the Premier. You can continue to express surprise at the fact that what Minister Leach did was found to be a breach, but certainly there's at least one member sitting on the front benches, one member of your cabinet, who would not have been surprised, and that's the Minister of Health. Only a few weeks ago, in answer to a question from my colleague from Riverdale, when she was asking him to intervene and save the Women's College Hospital, his answer was this:

"Mr Speaker, the honourable member would be asking the honourable member to break the law, and you should rule that out of order. That is not allowed in a Parliament. You are not allowed to coerce another member into breaking the law. The law is clear that this commission is at arm's length."

If the law is clear that this commission is at arm's length, why isn't it also equally clear in your mind and the Minister of Municipal Affairs' mind that he broke the law and he should resign?

**Hon Mr Harris:** There are lots of commissions and agencies that may be at arm's length, but what we are dealing with here is one that has been ruled quasi-judicial and should be treated as quasi-judicial. I don't mind telling you that members of our cabinet and our office were not clear that this was a quasi-judicial body in the same sense that we understood. Perhaps you are all much wiser than everybody else; I don't know that.

Having said that, as we've evolved with this new Health Services Restructuring Commission and we now have a ruling by the Integrity Commissioner, I have asked all members of our cabinet to respect that.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have asked the caucus as well that they might want to be cautious while we seek clarification.

In the meantime, I am astounded you're asking me to ignore the advice of —

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Silipo:** Premier, you just don't get it. We're asking you to live up to your responsibility, since the Minister of Municipal Affairs won't, and fire the minister. The Integrity Commissioner concluded:

"...Mr Leach is having difficulty in adopting an attitude which is less confrontational, more consistent with his...office...and more appreciative of the parliamentary conventions associated therewith."

He goes on to say how Minister Leach dismissed as frivolous the complaint by the member for Riverdale, a complaint which the Integrity Commissioner himself found to be very serious indeed. Then, of course, there is his basic statement with respect to Mr Leach's breach in regard to the hospital restructuring commission, where he called the minister's action "a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention in that the HSRC was set up as an independent quasi-judicial tribunal to operate at arm's length from the government."

The issue is quite clear. It's not about whether we're clear or you're clear; it's about applying the rules that exist. Why won't you apply the rules and fire the Minister of Municipal Affairs?

**Hon Mr Harris:** The member for Dovercourt, in response to the statement I made today, fully accepting the report of the Integrity Commissioner, said something along the lines — I believe I'm paraphrasing but it's how I understood it — that when I accepted the job as Premier and when members accepted their jobs in cabinet, we accepted the rules and procedures around the integrity act. If there were matters, they should be referred to the Integrity Commissioner and we should respect what the Integrity Commissioner says.

I think it would be very clear today that there would be no reason for any doubt that it would be inappropriate for any member, either in his capacity in cabinet or acting as an MPP, to represent their constituents and write to the Health Services Restructuring Commission.

Here is what the Integrity Commissioner said about Mr Leach: "He acted in good faith, in the mistaken belief he was entitled to do so."

**The Speaker:** Final supplementary.

1440

**Mr Silipo:** Premier, it's not just about the commissioner's findings. It's now an issue about your own conduct as Premier and the benchmark you set for acceptable behaviour by your ministers.

This is a minister who, quite frankly, hasn't screwed up today for the first time. On February 3, 1997, the Integrity Commissioner, in response to a complaint filed by the member for Riverdale, found the activities of Mr Leach's executive assistant to be inappropriate. Yet when questioned in the House, the same minister defended the actions of his staff member. On January 22, I don't need to remind you, the Speaker found that the activities for which this minister is responsible constituted a *prima facie* case of contempt for this Legislature.

Three very serious incidents in five months, Premier. How can you expect us to accept a standard of conduct that would accept a minister continuing in his office who



has been so seriously in breach of his responsibilities not once but three times in short order?

**Hon Mr Harris:** We have the Integrity Commissioner and the legislation to be able to refer these matters to. I suggest to you that I don't believe it's appropriate that we ignore his advice.

With regard to any member of my cabinet who has had made three or more mistakes in the last five months, all the members of this executive council, including the Premier, make many more mistakes than that every day. But I'll tell you this: We do our very best on behalf of the people of Ontario. We interpret the laws of the land with honesty, integrity and in as straightforward a nature as we can, but from time to time we will make many mistakes. In this case the mistake that was made was ruled by the Integrity Commissioner to have been done in good faith, with a recommendation of no penalty.

**The Speaker:** New question; third party.

**Mr Silipo:** In light of the Premier's answers, I'm going to ask a question of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It's clear that your Premier is in a real jam. He's got a situation in which you and two of your colleagues — you have been found, and obviously, on similar facts the commissioner would have to find the same in terms of your colleagues: that you broke the law.

I'll repeat for your understanding, because somehow it hasn't quite registered. He called your actions "a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention in that the HSRC," the hospital services commission, "was set up as an independent quasi-judicial tribunal to operate at arm's length from government."

Minister, why won't you do the honourable thing, accept responsibility, accept the fact that you've broken the law and offer your resignation to the Premier?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** What I will do is accept the advice of the Integrity Commissioner. I acted in good faith. There was no intent on my part to try and influence anyone. What I did was ask the commission to extend time for constituents to submit information, which I honestly believed at the time, and still do, was an appropriate thing to do on behalf of my constituents. The Integrity Commissioner has taken all that into consideration. His recommendation was that I made an error but it was done in good faith and that no penalty be imposed.

If the Integrity Commissioner doesn't believe that I should resign, I don't see any reason why I should. I think he has the authority to make a recommendation calling for a resignation. He chose not to do so after taking all the facts into consideration.

**Mr Silipo:** The commissioner wouldn't have taken everything into consideration, because the commissioner was only dealing with this one breach. But you yourself have been found to be wanting on two other occasions, on at least two we are aware of: when the Speaker found a *prima facie* contempt against you and your ministry, and when the commissioner, on a separate occasion, found your actions on February 3 with respect to your assistant to be inappropriate. Yet, like now, you just seemed to slough off the issue as if it wasn't important.

It is not sufficient for you to say you are accepting what the commissioner found, because you are not. You

are not accepting the standard to which the commissioner is holding us all and particularly today is holding you. If you did, you would be doing the honourable thing, and that is to tender your resignation to the Premier. Again I ask you, why won't you do the honourable thing and resign?

**Hon Mr Leach:** They make accusations about breaches, but let me read what the Integrity Commissioner said on the original inquiry from the member for Riverdale, "The commissioner found that the minister did not violate the act, either personally or as a result of his executive assistant's activities." The commissioner found that there was no problem with the original one.

In this one, he did say there was an error in judgement but it was made in good faith, and that is absolutely true. It was done in good faith. I was acting on behalf of my constituents in a matter in which I believed that I had jurisdiction. I wasn't requesting the commission — or did not try to influence their decision. I asked for an extension of time, which they granted. The Integrity Commissioner has taken all those things into consideration and accordingly recommended that no penalty be imposed.

**Mr Silipo:** The Integrity Commissioner, as you know, cites in his decision the case of the federal Minister of National Defence, who wrote a letter to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration concerning the immigration case of a constituent. In that case, Mr Collenette resigned because the immigration minister acts as a court of last resort in immigration cases and therefore, in writing to the minister, Mr Collenette was interfering in a quasi-judicial process. He accepted the high standard which all of us have to accept when we take on the office of minister.

Minister, you clearly also interfered with a quasi-judicial process. There is no denying that. There is no question about that. It's not an issue of whether you acted in good faith. The facts are undeniable, and the facts call for you to accept the responsibility for your actions, to do the honourable thing and to resign. Why will you not accept your responsibility and do the honourable thing and resign?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I am accepting the recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner. He's very clear. He says that no penalty should be imposed. He has taken everything into consideration and made that recommendation and I intend to comply with that.

**The Speaker:** New question; third party.

**Mr Silipo:** I have a question to the Premier. We've heard a lot today about ministers acting in good faith. I want to recall for you incidents that took place back in June 1991. Your Deputy Premier, in commenting on the actions taken by two of my colleagues at the time, the then member for Scarborough West and the then member for Sudbury East, when they tendered their resignations for simply having written a letter, your Deputy Premier at that time, in accepting that action, in accepting their tendering their resignations and taking responsibility for their actions, said, "I think in that respect, at least, I have more confidence than ever in the system we have here in Ontario." He accepted that that was the standard of integrity that all of us should live by when we sit on that side of the House, particularly when we sit in the ministers' chairs.



Why are you today lowering so significantly the standard of conduct now that you're sitting in the Premier's chair?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I believe it was your government, with the support of all parties, that elevated the standard to put it to the Integrity Commissioner for all cabinet members and for all members, to try and remove decision-making from a partisan, if you like, as to nature, degree and penalty of offence. We have accepted that. When we took office two years ago, we accepted not only the rules; we accepted the Integrity Commissioner as the one who ought to interpret and arbitrate those. I think it is not consistent to say, "Take part of what the Integrity Commissioner says, but not all." I would prefer to accept all of what the Integrity Commissioner says and I have done so in this case.

1450

**Mr Silipo:** The Integrity Commissioner does not replace you and your responsibilities towards the Parliament. You see, Premier, the big mistake you made in the way in which you've dealt with this and in the announcement you made today is that now you have turned this very clearly into an issue about your standards and your conduct. If you had done the honourable thing and asked for the resignations, or if your ministers had done the honourable thing and tendered their resignations before your even having to ask them, this issue would have blown over in short order.

We understand the balance that has to be struck. We understand how close to the line this is. But what you have done, Premier, in standing up and sloughing this off is to say to us and to the people of Ontario that you are now rejigging the standards because it's now up to you to apply the law and you don't like the effect it's having on you and on your government.

Premier, I ask you again, will you reflect on this matter, will you do the honourable thing and have the minister and the ministers responsible for these breaches of the law resign?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Nobody is sloughing anything off. Nobody treats these matters more seriously than do I. It is with that thought in mind — that I think it is important to have credible, believable standards of good faith, as well as reality — that we accept the Integrity Commissioner's recommendation on this matter.

You are quite right that I and this administration and this government will be held accountable for all of the policy decisions we make and for all of the standards we set for ourselves, and will be measured against that at the appropriate time. Just as I accept 100% the recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner, I will accept 100%, in two or three years' time, the recommendation of the people of Ontario.

#### EDUCATION ISSUES

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Last November you made some very specific commitments for this government on education. You called it Our Pledge to Parents. In that pledge you promised that you would

"provide students with a solid education that gives them the knowledge and skills to compete and succeed in Ontario and around the globe." What have you done to live up to your pledge?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I want to thank the member for the question. In fact, I have with me right now, today, Our Pledge to Parents that we put out to the people of Ontario. In it, if I can read from it, it says:

"We will provide students with a solid education that gives them the knowledge and skills to compete and succeed in Ontario and around the globe, and to contribute to our society as responsible citizens.

"What your child will learn: We will implement a rigorous and demanding curriculum that will focus on the basics: reading, writing, spelling and grammar, math, science, geography and Canadian history. Our standards will be clear, measurable and comprehensive in all grades."

I'm pleased to say that the beginning of that curriculum, the start of that curriculum, the maths and the languages for grades 1 to 8, were released a matter of a few weeks ago and are now circulating throughout the education system.

"How your child's progress will be measured: Standard, province-wide tests will tell you whether your child has learned what is expected. Parents will receive individual test results for both their child and their local school."

Right now those results are going out to parents so they can know how their student is doing with the grade 3 results we did across the province.

**Mrs Munro:** Minister, in the second part of your pledge you promised to ensure "early and continuous help for special-needs and disadvantaged students," to ensure "students will learn the self-discipline and skills that are vital to achieving their success," that we would respect teachers' professionalism, and that, "Students and teachers will work in schools that are safe and free from violence and drugs." Are we meeting these promises too?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I know the honourable member is concerned about the special needs students in Ontario, as are all the members of this chamber. I know we're all disturbed when we hear reports these children may be becoming lost in school budgets. That is why we have set out on the course of having an allocation model that will meet the needs of every student in the province, particularly special-needs students, and that is why there is a separate category for funding special-needs students, so that we can make sure their needs are met.

The member has also raised the issue of discipline. When I talk to parents and teachers, and yes, even students across the province, the issue of discipline comes up constantly. We will be taking initiatives over the course of the next few months to very seriously address the issue of discipline in our schools, to talk with parents and teachers and students about the discipline code. We intend that the school councils in every school across this province that are in law in Bill 104 will have a lot to do with the code of discipline in their individual schools so that we can make sure students are protected and that the code of conduct is proper.



## REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is to the Premier. What today is all about is your standards. It's lending focus on those more so than at any time in the history of your government. You, today, are under the microscope, and people in this province want to know what you are going to do in the face of a finding by the Integrity Commissioner that your minister broke the law, is in breach of the Members' Integrity Act, interfered with the workings of an independent, arm's-length, quasi-judicial body.

In his report, the Integrity Commissioner says, "In my opinion, Mr Leach is having difficulty in adopting an attitude which is less confrontational, more consistent with his present office as a member of the executive council, and more appreciative of the parliamentary conventions associated therewith." He goes to say, "I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach contravened the Members' Integrity Act...by communicating with the chair of the Health Services Restructuring Commission."

Premier, what are your standards in these circumstances? What do you think is the right thing to do?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** First of all, I want to say we treat this matter very seriously, but I want to take exception as to what the people of Ontario have on their minds today. I believe it's jobs, taxes, quality health care, quality education, how their members can represent them and make sure their views are heard by decision-makers.

Your interest today, as this report is tabled, is my response to it and what standards we accept. I accept as a standard not one whit less than the Honourable Justice Gregory Evans.

**Mr McGuinty:** Premier, you can't dodge this one. This is about your standards, and that's what people are gaining some insight into here today. We've got the case of a minister for whom this is the third strike. He once condoned a staffer of his who contacted a law office with a view to expressing disapproval of an action that was started against this government. This was the minister who on the second occasion was found in a *prima facie* way to be in contempt of this very Legislature. Now, most recently, this is the minister who is said in this report by the Integrity Commissioner to have been involved in a "flagrant breach of parliamentary convention in that the Health Services Restructuring Commission was set up as independent quasi-judicial tribunal to operate at arm's length from government."

Once again, today is all about you, and you can't dodge that. Are you going to or are you not going to do the right thing? Clearly, the right thing in these circumstances is to ask for and to demand the resignation of your minister.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I understand that in your role as opposition you are proffering that in your view that is the right thing to do. I am accepting the advice of the Honourable Justice Gregory T. Evans, Integrity Commissioner, who suggested to me what was the right thing to do, and I am doing that.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Premier, let's see if you are in fact accepting the findings of the commissioner, because the Members' Integrity Act, under section 34, which deals with penalties, has four different kinds of recommendations that the commissioner can make: that no penalty be imposed, that the member be reprimanded, that the member's right to sit and vote in the assembly be suspended for a specified period of time, or that the member's seat be declared vacant. Each of those penalties have to do with the member's rights as a member of this assembly. They don't have anything to do with the member's rights as a member of cabinet because only you, as Premier, have that jurisdiction and that authority. **1500**

First, Minister, you cannot escape, by sloughing off on to the findings of the commissioner, your responsibility to hold the Minister of Municipal Affairs up to a certain conduct and to call in this case for his resignation. Why won't you do that, Premier?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I have a clear choice here. I can accept the partisan advice of the Leader of the Opposition, I can accept the partisan advice of the member for Dovercourt or I can accept the impartial advice of a former Chief Justice who has analysed all the facts in this matter and who is, on unanimous recommendation as an appointment of this Legislative Assembly, the Integrity Commissioner. I have chosen to accept his advice.

**Mr Silipo:** Premier, please listen to this. The commissioner — and check with him if you need to — does not have any authority to recommend to you that you should fire a minister as a minister. He can only recommend to this Legislature actions that the Legislature may or may not then take with respect to the rights of a member as a member of this Legislature, not as a minister of cabinet. That's for you and you alone to determine.

That's why, Premier, it comes back to you, and it comes back to you on a minister who was three times in five short months found wanting by the Speaker once, by the commissioner twice. What kind of conduct are you accepting and what kind of conduct are you asking us to accept? To what low levels have you stooped if you will not in this circumstance accept or demand the minister's resignation?

**Hon Mr Harris:** I am getting some advice from the opposition benches to take part of the report but ignore another part of the report.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Kenora, I would ask that you withdraw the comment that you made, please.

**Mr Frank Michash (Kenora):** I withdraw.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I am hearing, by way of interjection, that it is my job as Premier, I believe, to seek out the best advice that I can. I have done that throughout my political career. I have freely acknowledged on a number of occasions that I believe one of the strengths I have brought to the position is my rather humble admission that I am not an expert on very many things. But I have been known to recognize those areas, particularly in the case of the law, where I am not an expert nor trained in the law, to seek the very best advice that I could.



In this case, it was in fact the critic for the official opposition who asked for the opinion and the advice of the Integrity Commissioner and I have accepted that. I don't know why you have not.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I've got a point of personal privilege from the member for Cochrane North and I've got a point of personal privilege from the member for Fort William.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise on a point of privilege under section 21 of the standing orders. The Premier earlier in the day indicated that he had a legal opinion that would caution backbench members against writing to the hospital restructuring commission. That is in clear contradiction of the written opinion that one of our members has from the Integrity Commissioner.

**The Speaker:** May I ask the standing order you're citing?

**Mrs McLeod:** Yes, 21, the right of privilege.

This clearly is a muzzling of backbenchers, not only of the government caucus, but of all parties. It comes at a time when we are about to leave for the summer recess and the hospital restructuring commission is about to make significant decisions affecting many of our communities.

I ask, Mr Speaker, if I may before you render your advice, that you, first of all, have the Premier table that legal opinion for all of us so we may be advised of the grounds of that legal opinion.

Second, Mr Speaker, I believe it's incumbent upon you to resolve the issue of the contradiction between the apparent legal opinion the Premier has received and the opinion we have as backbenchers from the Integrity Commissioner. I believe this is a very serious potential breach of our privileges.

**The Speaker:** I'm going to recess the House for 15 minutes, and come back.

*The House recessed from 1509 to 1530.*

**The Speaker:** On the point of privilege brought up by the member for Fort William, I do not believe any privileges have been breached. I appreciate your submissions, but after careful review I don't see it as a breach of privilege.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Point of order.

**The Speaker:** I want to go to a point of order for the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Ms Lankin:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am seeking your guidance and instruction on how to pursue the rights of the members in this assembly.

I draw your attention to the members' standing orders of the Legislative Assembly and to the Members' Integrity Act, which is contained therein. If you look to section 34 of the Members' Integrity Act, it sets out under subsection (1): "Where the commissioner conducts an inquiry under subsection 31(1) or (2) and finds that the member has contravened any of sections 2 to 4, 6 to 8, 10 to 12 or 14 to 18, has failed to file a private disclosure statement or a statement of material change within the time provided by section 20, has failed to

disclose relevant information in that statement or has...." It goes on to set out those sections. In this case, we're talking about section 4 of the act.

It then goes on to say that the commissioner shall issue a report and shall recommend in the report:

"(a) that no penalty be imposed;

"(b) that the member be reprimanded;

"(c) that the member's right to sit and vote in the assembly be suspended for a specific period or until a condition imposed by the commissioner is fulfilled; or

"(d) that the members's seat be declared vacant."

Subsection (2) says, "The assembly shall consider and respond to the report within 30 days after the day the report is laid before it."

Mr Speaker, the report has been laid before the assembly today. As you know, the House calendar motion has this House adjourning tomorrow, coming back on August 18. At this point in time we would like your advice as to how to pursue fulfilling the requirements of the act. It would be our contention that it be appropriate that this be called as a government order for debate, either today or tomorrow. But given that this has not occurred in the Legislature to the best of our knowledge, we are not aware of the appropriate way in which to pursue this and we would seek your advice and help in constructing the appropriate appeal to the Legislative Assembly to comply with section 34(2) of the Members' Integrity Act and debate the report of the commissioner and respond to that report.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In support of that point of order, it seems to me that the rules are clear, that the report must be in the designated period of time of 30 days. It does present a problem for us who are here today. It says "within 30 days," which to me would mean anything from one day to 30 days.

Since the House is indeed not going to be sitting beyond Thursday, then it seems to me that the report should be dealt with either this afternoon and this evening — in other words, today's session — or tomorrow's session to be able to comply with that particular provision. So certainly I think the point made by the member is most valid.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** On the point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise to seek your assistance. I don't want to prejudge the position the government House leader may take, but I would hope he would agree with us and either call for the debate in this emergency today or tomorrow. If, however, that should not happen and then the Assembly, I guess, would be in contravention of the act, unless something else were done to comply, we would have a very serious situation. So the question is, if the government is not prepared to act, and I hope they are, then what assistance can you give us in the opposition to ensure that the Assembly is in —

**The Speaker:** Truly that is conjecture at this point in time, and I think before we enter into that realm we should determine what the ruling is that I will make, and the ultimate responses to that ruling.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** Mr



Speaker, let me seek your advice. Is it your intent to make a ruling on this at the present time? I am seeing this for the first time. I really need to know what it means. It doesn't say that there needs to be a response today or indeed tomorrow. There may be other ways of dealing with this; I'm not sure. At any rate, there is nothing which advocates here that a decision or a response needs to be made at this present time. I can only submit —

**The Speaker:** Order, for a moment, please. I suppose that's what we're doing, just exactly what you said, and that's why I would seek your advice or input into what it is that you feel can and cannot be done according to the order here. That's why I'm hearing these points of order. I'm not even sure if they're points of order or if they're points of direction. If you'd like to provide some direction to the Speaker, then of course I'm willing to listen and hear them.

**Hon David Johnson:** I would submit, Mr Speaker, that no decision on this matter would be prudent today. I will certainly undertake to understand this better and understand in terms of what the obligations are on this Assembly as outlined in the integrity act, but it clearly doesn't contemplate the necessity for a response or a ruling here today. Again, I'll give you my undertaking to investigate this matter and to respond to you, and I think that would suffice for today, in my submission.

**The Speaker:** Let me just be clear for the members in the assembly today. I have a responsibility to interpret these rules as they affect the assembly, and that is what in fact I will have to do. I will have to interpret this rule. I'm hearing submissions on each particular party's or person's opinion of how this rule will be impacting the assembly and their interpretation on that rule. I want to be clear about that, particularly for the government House leader.

So if it's a submission you'd like to make, then I think the most appropriate time to make that submission about your interpretation of this rule and its impact on the assembly would be now.

Next, I've got the member for Welland-Thorold, who was up. I would want to go back, if the government House leader is interested, to him next.

1540

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I thank you kindly. Clearly, subsection (2) makes this mandatory. There's no equivocation about the word "shall." It not only "shall consider" but also "shall report." It also sets clearly and obviously the time frame "within 30 days."

This is the point I want to make: (1) It says "The assembly shall," and I suggest that implies it's not a matter for House leaders, for instance, to agree upon by virtue of taking outside the 30-day time frame; it's not within the purview of the assembly to deviate from what's required here. That puts the ball very much into your court, I submit. It's not a matter that can be called by the House leader of the government as an order of the day. It's something the assembly has to respond to.

Speaking to the 30-day time frame, I suggest that implies it's something that has to be done promptly and that the indication of 30 days is merely to accept the realities of a situation. But it is as much as saying it should be done at the earliest opportunity, because what

it's doing is giving the assembly an opportunity to address the condemnation of certain behaviour by one particular member of the assembly. It could be more than one in this case, but the report refers to one particular member of the assembly. It's a condemnation of that member's conduct.

The House has an obligation to consider and respond to that condemnation. In the interests of both the person who is the subject matter, in this case the Minister of Housing, and in the interests of the House, I'm suggesting to you that it's incumbent upon you, as Speaker, to be responsible for ensuring that this happens, also to ensure that it happen at the earliest possible opportunity, and in any event no later than 30 days. I suggest to you that that is a proper interpretation here of "within 30 days," that the interests of everybody demand —

**Mr Wildman:** Thirty calendar days.

**Mr Kormos:** Thirty calendar days — the interests of everyone demand that this be done at the first possible opportunity. I suggest that could be properly read in too, what's spoken of by virtue of it being mandatory, by virtue of this being one of the narrowest or most rigid time restrictions, I suggest to you, in any of all our rules. That it isn't designed to provide a great deal of leeway about when this is to be done, that the mandatory requirement that this be done within 30 days suggests very strongly that it be done at the earliest opportunity.

**Hon Mr Johnson:** This is a matter that has come up rather quickly that does, on the appearance of it, need to be responded to, using the words that I see, "within 30 days." If that's correct, then this is simply day one of those 30 days, and I would question the necessity for making a ruling that would, for example, require debate today or indeed a debate tomorrow in the sense that at the very least the Speaker does have the ability, under clause 10 of the standing orders, to recall the House at some point, with the advice of the government. That ability is there to recall the House, and presumably that could address the situation if there was a concern that a particular rule was not being obeyed. I think that would work.

Second, it's unclear for me, just seeing this for the first time, whether the 30 days in question pertain to sessional days or calendar days. I understand that the opposition parties would prefer it to be calendar days, but seeing —

**Mr Kormos:** That's what it says.

**Hon David Johnson:** It doesn't say calendar days; it says 30 days. Is that sessional days or is that calendar days? These are the kinds of things that would be difficult to interpret right on the spot, and I would think at the very least the parties should have some time to reflect on this at least overnight, and tomorrow would be more than adequate time for you. If you felt that a ruling was required this week, then I would submit to you that a ruling could be postponed at least until that point.

If this could be reasonably interpreted as 30 sessional days, then there is a good deal of time to respond. Even if 30 calendar days would be the interpretation, there's still tomorrow and there's still the ability to recall the House if that is required.

I might say that many of these reports, probably all of them, are considered, are accepted by the House and



there is no need for debate. Members opposite may not think that's the case in this regard, but I suspect that on having the ability to study this, and clearly we have not had the ability to do the research, and I think that's important, if there is to be a ruling of some importance, then I believe all parties should have some opportunity to research, to understand the implications, to determine if there is a precedent in this regard, not only what words say on a page. You yourself, Mr Speaker, in making many rulings, are swayed by previous rulings, by precedent, by what has happened in the past, that sort of thing. I submit to you that information is not available here today.

Is it fair to be put in a place to have to make a decision in the absence of that sort of information? Is it fair for all three parties on the spur of the moment to have to put forward their best case in the absence of that sort of research? It may be more reasonable to revisit this issue tomorrow and at least allow the parties 24 hours to investigate, to determine is it 30 calendar days, 30 sessional days, is there a precedent for this, is there a way these things have been handled in the past etc? That would be basically my submission to you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: First of all I'd like to point out for your consideration that standing order 10(a) clearly states that you have that power "[w]henever the House stands adjourned, if it appears to the Speaker, on the advice of the government, that the public interest requires the House" to be recalled. The House has not as yet adjourned, so standing order 10 has no relevance currently. It only becomes relevant when the House is adjourned.

The way I understand it is that at midnight last night we passed a calendar motion which states that this House, after it adjourns tomorrow, will come back on August 18. So as far as the House is concerned, it's in session today, tomorrow and then on August 18.

There is nothing in the Members' Integrity Act that indicates that the word "day" should not be taken in its normal context, a day being 24 hours long from sun-up one day to sun-up the next day. It doesn't talk about sessional days anywhere in the act at all. It doesn't mention sessional days at all. I would just like to reiterate and agree with the member for Welland-Thorold that it makes it quite clear that there's absolutely no discretion there at all. I'm referring now to subsection 34(2):

"The assembly shall consider and respond to the report within 30 days...." It's extremely clear. It "shall consider" it during that period of time which, it seems to me, only leaves you two alternatives: We either consider it today and tomorrow, or possibly tomorrow, but I think this matter is of such an urgent nature that it should be dealt with immediately. There's not a question of recalling the House at some point in time later on. Standing order 10 at this point is of no relevance because the House has not as yet adjourned.

1550

Obviously the Members' Integrity Act is only three years old, but it's an act that an awful lot of thought and consideration went into. It is not merely just anticipating something that the House leader might say about referring

it to some sort of a committee. The act is quite clear. It talks about the assembly. In the preamble as well, it talks about the rights of the members of the assembly. We have the right, in accordance with the provisions of this act, to consider and respond to the report. In my opinion, that should happen as soon as possible.

**Mr Wildman:** Just to respond to the comments of the government House leader, first, as other members have said, it's clear to all of us here what the calendar is. For the government House leader to argue that a law, a statute, when it says "days" is not clear that it means 24 hours is a little ridiculous. We are here dealing with a statute; we are not dealing with one of the rules of the House. If it were just simply one of the rules of the House, it might be arguable, I suppose, about whether or not it's a sessional day. This is a statute. If the statute meant "sessional days," it would say so. It says "days." So it is clear that we have to deal with this as an assembly in 30 days, by July 25. We also know that the calendar that was passed last night says that we are adjourning tomorrow and not returning until August 18.

The other point that was made by the government House leader about recalling the House was responded to by the member for Kingston and The Islands, but there's another problem with that. The statute puts the obligation here on the assembly, not on the government. The assembly must consider and respond to the report within 30 days. It's the assembly. The assembly might determine how that is to take place in order to be in compliance with the law, but how we deal with this isn't solely on the advice of the government; this is the responsibility of all of us as members of the assembly. Since we are adjourning tomorrow night as per the calendar motion, we must deal with this today or tomorrow. That's clear.

The government House leader said it would be better to have some time to consider this. I would suggest that on occasion in this House things happen which require members of the assembly to act immediately, without having the luxury of long periods to consider. For instance, when the Speaker ruled recently with regard to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing that he considered there might be a *prima facie* case for contempt, it was the responsibility of the members to move a motion immediately, not to say to the Speaker: "Thanks very much for your ruling. Now can we have 24 hours to consider our motion?" The same applies here. The assembly must deal with it within 30 days. That means as soon as possible. We only have 48 hours. We've got to deal with this today or tomorrow.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the submissions. They're all good, and I know the next few will be good as well, but it's important, I think, that if you make them, you not retrace some steps but give me some new information, and as briefly as possible. That would be very helpful. As I said before, and I will say always, I will not not listen to points of order on any of these.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** Mr Speaker, there appears to be some urgency that has been referred to by yourself, in comments that have been made by you and members of the House, that this matter be dealt with now. There doesn't seem to be, with due respect to you



and with due respect to members of the House, anything in the Members' Integrity Act —

**The Speaker:** I just want to be clear to the member for Dufferin-Peel that I have made no comments other than the fact that I'm willing to hear comments. I want to make sure no one is presupposing my judgement. I know you said it's my willingness to deal with it now; I have not said that. All I'm saying is right now I'd like to hear some submissions.

**Mr Tilson:** The point I'm trying to make is that there's nothing to say that this House can't deal with this tomorrow.

**Mr Wildman:** Well, we need a guarantee.

**Mr Tilson:** I'm simply saying that with respect to making a decision now or dealing with it now, there doesn't seem to be anything in the act that requires that this matter be disposed of this very moment. That's the first comment I make.

The other comment I'd like to make is that we are spending some time of course on subsection 34(2). I would submit that subsection (4) further deals with this issue; in other words, the issue if the Integrity Commissioner has stated that there be no penalty imposed. Subsection 34(4) talks about the power of the assembly.

"Despite section 46 of the Legislative Assembly Act, the assembly does not have power to inquire further into the contravention, to impose a penalty if the commissioner recommended that none be imposed, or to impose a penalty other than the one recommended."

In other words, if the commissioner has said that no penalty be imposed, I would submit that's the end of it and that subsection 34(4) further defines what is to be done in subsection 34(2); that the only time subsection (2) comes into play or comes into effect is when a penalty has been imposed, or the recommendations — in other words, one of the other statements has taken place. That's the second comment I would like you to consider.

The other issue that has been raised, I think the member for Kingston and The Islands and the member for Algoma have talked about what "days" mean. Everything in this place talks about sessional days. This whole assembly operates on what a sessional day is. A sessional day is defined by the standing orders of this House under order 2. "The term 'sessional day' means any day on which the House meets." Not any calendar day; it's a sessional day. That's the only day on which this place legally can operate. We can't sit on any day we choose; it has to be a sessional day.

I would submit that this was the intent of the Members' Integrity Act when it said "within 30 days." You can't possibly take any other interpretation of calendar days, because we don't sit by calendar days; we sit by sessional days. Every day we deal with issues. Points of order have come up even quite recently on the interpretation of what a day is as to when orders must be disposed of during the House. A sessional day clearly means "any day on which the House meets." The arguments or the submissions that are being made, particularly by members of the opposition, that this must be dealt with in the next 30 calendar days are not correct.

Those are my submissions, in summary: (1) Because of subsection 34(4), because the Integrity Commissioner has

not imposed a penalty, that's the end of it and the assembly need not deal with this matter any more. Why would they? That's why subsection 34(4) is there.

(2) If you decide my interpretation is not correct, then the question is, when must this House deal with it? I would submit that it must be dealt with in 30 sessional days, because that's what the orders of this place deal with.

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Speaker, very briefly, I want to respond to the points just made. First of all, with respect to the Members' Integrity Act, section 34, and the implications of subsection (4) which indicates that, "Despite section 46 of the Legislative Assembly Act, the assembly does not have the power to inquire further into the contravention, to impose a penalty if the commissioner recommended that none be imposed, or to impose a penalty other than the one recommended," I would point out to you very clearly that in that section it indicates that the assembly does not have the power to impose a penalty if the commissioner recommended that none be imposed.

1600

Obviously, it contemplates the assembly debating the report and dealing with the report, but restricts what can be done by the assembly. If you read through that, it is very clear that if the commissioner issues a report, the assembly "shall consider" it, and then it goes on to deal with what the nature of the response would be and/or what the powers of the assembly would be with respect to that, but there is no variation from the dictate here that it shall be considered.

Second, I want to respond to the argument of the member with respect to sessional days. It has been pointed out to you, and I'll very briefly say again, that the standing orders of the House, the rules, refer to sessional days. This is a piece of legislation, and legislation, if it meant sessional days, would say that. It is referring to calendar days.

More important, the reason why you should interpret it that way, if you have any doubt at all, is if you look to the purpose of this section, subsection 34(1), it sets out that the commissioner, where he conducts an inquiry — which has happened in this case — and finds the member to have contravened sections — which has happened in this case — may impose penalties. Those penalties include things like, "That the member's right to sit and vote in the assembly be suspended for a specific period or until a condition imposed by the commissioner is fulfilled."

The sections that follow, where the assembly shall consider the report and give a response, allow within that response that the assembly may approve that recommendation of the penalty or may reject that recommendation. So if the commissioner has ruled and imposed a penalty of suspending a member's right to sit in this Legislative Assembly, the assembly is to consider that and review that and may, in its wisdom, reject that. Surely, you would not be looking at 30 sessional days in which to consider that. The consideration of the report must be done in a very timely fashion to assure full rights and privileges to all members of this assembly.



One other thing, Mr Speaker: I did ask you at the beginning for advice with respect to how we pursue this. I understand that within the standing orders there is, under rule 44(a), a rule that says: "A motion that the House discuss a sessional paper other than a committee report requires notice. No amendment may be made to such a motion."

It is not clear to me that this is a sessional paper, but I think that is something that should be determined, and if it is, I would certainly indicate the intention of our caucus to submit such a notice, and that notice therefore would be to debate this tomorrow. As we're talking about calendar days, that's the last day available to us. Given that notice would have to be provided before a certain time of the clock under the standing orders, I would ask for your assistance in helping us facilitate a response and direction as to our actions in a timely fashion that allows us to comply with both the standing orders and the intent of the legislation.

**The Speaker:** I understand that and I will give you my undertaking to consider it as part of the further deliberations. Furthermore, there's no rotation in points of order.

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** I'll keep my remarks brief. You've heard plenty today. I just want to address a couple of issues.

One is the issue of urgency and why we should deal with it in a timely fashion. This is an issue of confidence in responsible government and the notion of ministerial responsibility that comes with that. Moreover, if you read the decision of Judge Evans, it clearly says that in this case we have a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention. There is certainly a *prima facie* case established that we must act with some urgency and some speed.

The Members' Integrity Act is clear that where there is a report of this kind, we have to respond within 30 days. That has been said. The member for Dufferin-Peel has said, "Well, there was no penalty imposed here, and therefore what's the big deal?" In fact, the Members' Integrity Act, in section 36(4), nowhere says, "If there's no penalty, you don't have to have a response." We are required to give a response within 30 days. That's the law.

As to the issue of "day," I think it's already been pointed out that the standing orders are very clear in section 2 that it's a sessional day. The Members' Integrity Act simply speaks to "day." The rules of statutory interpretation require you to interpret that liberally and broadly. You cannot import "sessional" into a statute that does not otherwise say "sessional."

I would also further point out to you that in the integrity act, all the references there with respect to dates refer to calendar years. In that same section around miscellaneous provisions, if you look at, for instance, paragraph 3 of section 36, it refers specifically to "calendar year." Therefore, I would argue that you are required to give a very liberal interpretation, that it ought to be a calendar day, that there is a need for urgency and therefore the House should debate this at its earliest convenience, which is now.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Mr Speaker, I will try not to repeat anything that has been presented to you other than to point out, because I think

it's critical to this debate, that subsection 34(2) states, "The assembly shall consider and respond"; not necessarily make decisions, not attempt to change anything, but "consider and respond." Clearly, the legislation was meant to ensure that we deal with important reports that come from the commissioner.

I want to add to the argument of the member for Downsview, when talking about whether they're sessional days or calendar days, by pointing out that under clause 20(1)(a) — this is under the Members' Integrity Act, the same one of which subsection 34(4) is being discussed — it states that each of us as members, once we're elected, must "within 60 days of being elected" submit our disclosure forms. You know yourself, Speaker, as a member of this place, that the commissioner is very sticky, as he or she should be, about those days. That is not sessional days. That is very clearly calendar days.

Just to further drive the point home, if you will, subsection 18(1) speaks to "during the 12 months." Is someone going to suggest that those are sessional months? I think in this case there is a very clear message that those are calendar days, calendar months, as opposed to sessional, given that we are talking a piece of legislation versus the standing rules of this place.

I also would like to point out to you, Speaker, that someone had suggested that time limits may not be as big an issue as we are saying they are, given that you, under section 10(a) of the standing House rules, can call the House back. I would like to submit to you that we are of course dealing with a very hot political issue that involves whether members of the cabinet, as a result of this report, ought to be held accountable and be allowed to maintain as ministers. Therefore, the government doesn't want us to deal with this. We would like to. That's obvious to anyone watching these proceedings. It's certainly obvious to you. But to make the argument that we don't need to get a ruling from you today because you have the right to call the House back is not an effective argument in this case. The wording of 10(a) is, "Whenever the House stands adjourned, if it appears to the Speaker, on the advice of the government, that the public interest requires the House to meet at an earlier time," etc, etc — "on the advice of the government." Speaker, if the government doesn't want to deal with this, they just don't have to advise you of that. Then you don't have the authority to call the House back.

The problem for us is that there are only two days left where we are guaranteed to be sitting. If we don't meet this requirement, yes, you can state that the House is in breach of the standing rules or it could even be in breach of the Members' Integrity Act. I'm not aware that you have remedy to make right our loss of rights, but you do have an opportunity at this point to ensure that our rights are upheld by allowing us to debate it either this afternoon, this evening, or some time tomorrow, and enforce that on this House. Otherwise, Speaker, I submit to you, if you don't do that, this issue will not see the light of day. We will not debate it. We will have lost our rights, and as much as you might like to, I'm not aware that you have any remedy to give us back our rights. I leave that submission with you, sir.



**Hon David Johnson:** That may be so, but this is hypothetical today. I would strongly submit to you that whereas the members opposite may wish this item to be dealt with this afternoon, may wish it to be dealt with tomorrow, if indeed what we're reading before us requires it to be dealt with either in 30 sessional days or 30 calendar days, there is nothing here that compels it to be dealt with today or tomorrow. Clearly, what is contemplated is "consider and respond" — whatever that means — "within 30 days." It's very puzzling to me, in light of that and notwithstanding the opposition's desire to do things on their own invented time frame, how a government could not be permitted to respond on the basis of the rule.

1610

A reasonable ruling might be to live up to the rule in some fashion, but I would fail to understand how a ruling must be responded to today or tomorrow. If at the end of the day it is considered that some consideration and response is needed within 30 days, there may be other ways of doing that. At this point, there is no violation. At this point, there is no discrepancy of the rules.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Like what?

**Hon David Johnson:** Like what? There could be unanimous consent to have the House sit on Monday. There could be unanimous consent with the House leaders dealing with this issue to recall the House at some point within the 30 days. The government could approach the Speaker and say that at some point, on the 25th day or the 12th day or any other day, in compliance with this, that yes we think we should recall the House. That would then —

**Ms Lankin:** No, this is the assembly, not the government.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I understand that the members opposite want to have their own interpretation of what's here, but clearly what's here does not require any consideration or response within one day or two days. There are all sorts of other rules that are contained here, but until there's a breach, until there's a violation, they cannot be enforced. There is no breach or violation. I see you've already got up.

**The Speaker:** I don't mean to shut it down. Let me just say quickly that I need to consult with someone with respect to this issue, and I would like to do that. If I could just do that and come back and hear the rest of the submissions, I'd appreciate it.

**Hon David Johnson:** Could I just make one more new point?

**The Speaker:** The point is this: I will hear your submission's next point when I get back. If I don't leave in three minutes, I won't be able to consult with this person.

**Hon David Johnson:** Okay.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. We can go on with petitions etc and allow me to come back in here and hear the rest of the submissions. I know it's asking a lot. I ask the members to indulge me. I wouldn't ask for this if I didn't need it.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** How long will you be?

**The Speaker:** How long? I don't know.

## PETITIONS

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition from Citizens for Local Democracy entitled "Petition to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature."

It reads as follows:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to all the people of Ontario."

I affix my signature to this petition, as I'm in complete agreement with its sentiments.

### TVONTARIO

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's signed by 10 people from Smooth Rock Falls. It's a petition concerning protecting TVOntario because of the broad coverage it gives and I support the petition. I affix my name to the petition.

### ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Representation Act, 1996, states that: 'For the purpose of representation in the Legislative Assembly, Ontario is divided into electoral districts whose number, names and boundaries are identical to those of its federal electoral districts'; and



"Whereas the new provincial boundaries have grouped the village of Arthur with the Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey riding; and

"Whereas the village is no longer included with most of Wellington and the flow of our people is to the south for employment, hospital services etc;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We request exemption from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey riding to become part of the Waterloo-Wellington riding."

This is signed by approximately three quarters of the electors of the village of Arthur. I have affixed my signature to it as well.

#### TRAFFIC FATALITY

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas on October 9, 1996, Mrs Popi Nikitopoulos was struck by a speeding car while crossing Avenue Road on a green traffic signal. The car struck her with such force that she sustained massive head trauma, numerous fractures and severe internal injuries. Eleven days after her accident she succumbed to her injuries and died. The driver of the car was charged with failing to obey a traffic signal and careless driving. On December 3, 1996, the case appeared before the Ontario provincial court. The crown agreed to a plea bargain with the defence to a lesser charge: failing to obey a traffic signal. The driver was fined \$350.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We are requesting a full investigation by the Attorney General into this case because we believe that the accused should have been convicted of careless driving in addition to failing to obey a traffic signal;

"Furthermore, the driving privileges of the accused should have been suspended for a minimum period of one year regardless of her driving record.

"In addition, we are requesting that the Attorney General amend the law to reflect a stricter and more appropriate penalty when a traffic fatality occurs as a result of someone's careless operation of a motor vehicle. There should be an automatic suspension of the person's driving privileges as well as a significant fine upon conviction."

There are well over 1,000 signatures here and I am pleased to attach my signature as well.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas this government's contribution to prevention services made through the WCB has been reduced from \$62 million to \$47 million, with no explanation as to where this money has gone; and

"Whereas the prevention services that the Ministry of Labour once provided are being offloaded to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and other safety associations, thereby increasing the demand for the prevention services provided by the centre; and

"Whereas the government has gutted the certification training standards for health and safety committee members and replaced them with minimalist performance standards which, in combination with funding cuts, has resulted in a 40% reduction in the staff of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre is facing further cuts of \$2.3 million to finance the establishment of several new employer safety associations, thereby duplicating administrative costs and services;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the gutting of the funding of prevention services provided by the Workers' Health and Safety Centre.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the moneys taken from the health and safety prevention services of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the other safety associations be returned to them."

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I add my name to theirs.

1620

#### CASINOS

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario. It deals with the expansion of casinos and the installation of electronic gambling devices in Ontario and a request for the province to hold a binding referendum in conjunction with the 1997 municipal elections. I attach my signature to the petition.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is proposing to completely change the structure of relations between the province and municipalities without any public consultation with Ontarians; and

"Whereas the restructuring proposes to download on to municipalities the cost of public transportation and essential social services like welfare and long-term care for seniors and people with chronic illness; and

"Whereas the restructuring takes away the power to levy tax on school boards and subsequently any real power over their schools and curricula; and

"Whereas the actions of the government are not respecting the promise to keep funding at an actual level and don't recognize that different communities don't have the same resources to absorb these new burdens and that it is creating some inequity in access to essential services; and

"Whereas the government does not show any interest in consultation of the population and it does not take into account the reaction of the population, it represents a threat to democracy; and

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, are hereby expressing non-confidence against the government of the province of Ontario because we are concerned with the inequities of the life of the province and the wellbeing of the children, neighbours and communities."

I've also signed my name to that petition.

## RURAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I have received petitions titled, Stand up for Rural Health Care, signed by people from Ohsweken, Fisherville, Cayuga and other areas in and near my riding.

"Whereas there is urgent concern about the future of community hospitals located in Dunnville, Hagersville, Simcoe and Tillsonburg; and

"Whereas distance, weather and doctor shortages are serious barriers to people in rural areas accessing emergency services and health care; and

"Whereas local communities have worked for years to establish, maintain, improve and modernize hospitals, physician and other health services;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt a rural health policy to deal with these problems and to protect the health care rights of rural communities, and that hospital boards, district health councils, the Ontario Health Services Restructuring Commission and the government of Ontario adhere to this rural policy."

I agree with this petition and therefore affix my name to it.

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass bills empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

I agree with the petition and affix my signature.

## SCHOOL PRAYER

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** I have a petition here:

"The Grand Orange Lodge of Ontario, being a firm supporter of the public system and the Protestant faith, does with the undersigned hereby petition the government of Ontario to reinstate the Lord's Prayer in the public school system of Ontario."

## COURT DECISION

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas communities strongly disagree with allowing women to go topless in public;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation to require women to wear tops in public places for the protection of our children and public safety in general."

I'll sign this so that it can be properly submitted.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and

"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms Castrilli from the standing committee on social development presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 138, An Act to promote road safety by increasing periods of suspension for Criminal Code convictions, impounding vehicles of suspended drivers, requiring treatment for impaired drivers, raising fines for driving while suspended, impounding critically defective commercial vehicles, creating an absolute liability offence for wheel separations, raising fines for passing stopped school buses, streamlining accident reporting requirements and amending other road safety programs / Projet de loi 138, Loi visant à favoriser la sécurité routière en augmentant les périodes de suspension pour les déclarations de culpabilité découlant du Code criminel, en mettant en fourrière les véhicules de conducteurs faisant l'objet d'une suspension, en exigeant le traitement des conducteurs en état d'ébriété, en augmentant les amendes pour conduite pendant que son permis est suspendu, en mettant en fourrière les véhicules utilitaires comportant des défauts critiques, en créant une infraction entraînant la responsabilité absolue en cas de détachement des roues, en augmentant les amendes pour dépassement d'un autobus scolaire arrêté, en simplifiant les exigences relatives à la déclaration des accidents et en modifiant d'autres programmes de sécurité routière.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Shall Bill 138 be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 40th report.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Do you wish to make a statement, member for Nickel Belt?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** Not other than to say the committee continues to chug along efficiently.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.



## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### PROTECTION AGAINST PEDOPHILES ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA PROTECTION CONTRE LES PÉDOPHILES

Mr Jim Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to provide protection against pedophiles by preventing them from working in direct contact with children / Projet de loi 145, Loi prévoyant la protection contre les pédophiles en empêchant ceux-ci de travailler en contact direct avec des enfants.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Do you have a statement?

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** The bill prohibits persons from retaining or continuing to retain the services of a paedophile in a position that involves dealing directly with children on a regular basis. The bill also prohibits paedophiles from acting in a position of that type six months after the bill comes into force.

A paedophile is defined as a person who has been convicted of sexual crimes involving children or in respect of whom a prohibition has been made to keep the persons away from children. The bill creates offences for persons who contravene the prohibitions. However, an employer who has employed a paedophile is not guilty of an offence if the employer has obtained a letter from the police stating that the employee is not a paedophile.

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion, as amended, for adoption of amendments to the standing orders.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr Wood had the floor.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** On the last day, I had entered into a debate on the rule changes that the member —

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Just a moment, please.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I just wanted to clarify that we did have unanimous consent for the member to speak because of an unfortunate accident that occurred, and I think the member missed part of his rotation. So we certainly give unanimous consent to complete.

**The Acting Speaker:** That's right. That was agreed previously.

**Mr Len Wood:** Thank you very much. As I said, I appreciate the cooperation in the House. I wasn't sure at what point the speaking order was going to come back, but I had started out and had about five minutes on the clock.

The rule changes that are being proposed are very scary.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane North, can you take your seat for a moment. I ask the members of the House to come to order, please. I can't hear the member for Cochrane North. Thank you.

**Mr Len Wood:** Thank you very much. It's very important that people listen to what is being debated in this Legislature, because what we have here are rule changes that are being contemplated. If we go back to Bill 26, the bully bill that was brought into the House, we had to take drastic action in the assembly so that the public and the media would be aware of what the government was trying to do at that time. Under the new rules, if the Premier and his staff decide to put together a piece of legislation, that piece of legislation could be passed through all stages in this House and become law in less than a week. This is very frightening, especially with what we see happening in the Legislature today, where the Integrity Commissioner has made a ruling saying that the laws are there and that cabinet ministers shouldn't allowed to break the law. We know that not all the cabinet ministers abide by all the rules and regulations that are written down, and we could see all kinds of weird pieces of —

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: It appears to me that we do not have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, would you see if there is a quorum.

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane North.

**Mr Len Wood:** This shows the incompetence of this government. They were elected with a majority government of 82 members and it is their responsibility to keep a quorum in this House and to make sure that things run in an orderly fashion. If I were the Premier, I'd be getting hold of the whip and making sure he does his job or taking the money away from him. There's no use in giving people a few extra dollars to whip the people into making sure there is a quorum here. If they're not going to do their job, they should be replaced.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** He's paid the same as a cabinet minister.

**Mr Len Wood:** There you go. Cabinet ministers get the same as the whip does, and we see that a lot of people are not sitting in here. We need 20 members to make sure there is a quorum.

One of the other concerns I have is night sitting motions. For example, the government House leader or the Premier or people in the Premier's office can decide that they want to spring a surprise attack on the opposition members in the House and bring in a motion, without notice, to debate any piece of legislation from 6:30 till 9:30 at night. As far as we're concerned, it would be very unfair if the opposition parties were challenged with this on a continuous basis.

The Legislature is the highest law body of Ontario, and for the present government to feel that they want to bring in rule changes that are going to shut out the media, shut



out the opposition, whether it be the Liberals or the NDP, so that nobody will be aware of what piece of legislation they want to bring in, and we know there are a lot of pieces of legislation —

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Despite the presence of the whip in the House, I don't think there's a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Cochrane North.

**Mr Len Wood:** It's quite obvious that on a hot, sunny summer afternoon the Conservative members are out there around town and not doing their job as they're supposed to do: sitting in this Legislature, listening and getting involved in the debate. These are important things and we should have a quorum here at all times.

I could go through all the rules one by one. If you look at the muzzle that the government wants to put on the debate in this Legislature, they want to limit the debate. I know the member for — John Baird — brought forward some of the rules. He's saying he brought them forward, but I believe they were brought up in the Premier's office or in the House leader's office and he had very little to do with it. They're trying to compare —

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** On a point of order, Speaker: When we're being ridiculed for not having enough people in here, how can we not use the proper form of address when we're speaking to other members of the Parliament?

**The Acting Speaker:** I'm sorry, I didn't understand your point of order.

**Mr Rollins:** He referred to a member of Parliament by his name and not his riding, and I believe that's not proper.

**The Acting Speaker:** I believe you're correct, yes. I didn't hear that, but I must remind you, member for Cochrane North, to refer to members by their ridings.

**Mr Len Wood:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm well aware, but I don't why the member would be so concerned about people being named by their name. My name is Len Wood and I'm from Cochrane North and I'm proud of it. If the Conservative members are ashamed of their members being called by their names, how could they be recognized?

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**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** You're the ones talking about rules.

**Mrs Boyd:** You are breaking the rules. That's the point.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for London Centre, come to order.

**Mr Len Wood:** As I was saying, to go back to when Bill 26, the bully bill of all bills, was brought into this House, both opposition parties had to take drastic action to make sure the media and the public were aware of the type of legislation that was being brought through. Under the present rules being proposed, it would be possible for

the government to bring in a bill like 26 — and we're going to see more of them. We know that in August the government wants to beat up on the teachers. They want to adjust all their collective agreements, all their seniority lists and take a real beating-up attitude towards the teachers, probably in August when the Legislature comes back.

We dealt with everything in a fairer way when we were in government. We had some expenditure controls and we were serious about bringing the expenditures under control. We had a plan to balance the budget in our first term after being re-elected for another term. It wasn't to be, but we had the plan. The budget would have been balanced faster than what Mike Harris is proposing to do in his agenda, and it wouldn't have meant thousands of people being laid off.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I don't mean to interrupt. If you could stop the member's time, I'd appreciate it.

#### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I would like to hear the rest of the submissions that were being made earlier. I believe I left off with the government House leader. I don't see the member I promised to go to next, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, and I'm sorry if he's not here. If he gets here before the government House leader is done, I gave him my undertaking to hear from him.

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** There are two points I was wishing to make primarily. The one I think I mostly did make is that this is a matter that's hypothetical at this point. If indeed 30 days are required to fulfil some obligation, one would expect that the body involved, in this case the assembly, under the direction of the government calling it as business, would have 30 days to respond to that. In that case, it may be a legitimate ruling to indicate that the assembly, with the direction of the government calling business, should live up to that obligation. But to presuppose that that obligation won't be lived up to on the first day, and therefore to make a ruling that it must be considered on day 1 or day 2 when 30 days, either sessional or calendar, are allotted — it puzzles me how anybody could argue on that basis. Obviously that hasn't got any merit.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Sessional or calendar?

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Calendar.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate that you want to have input, but I'd like to have some degree of decorum.

**Hon David Johnson:** There are any number of ways, involving cooperation from all parties and involving your good offices, Mr Speaker, in which the assembly could consider this matter over the course of the remaining 28 days, whether those are sessional days or calendar days. I find it extremely hard to understand how a ruling would be appropriate at this point involving either today or tomorrow, the first two days of those 30 days.

Second, the words in question say, "The assembly shall consider and respond to the report within 30 days...." I don't know what that means. Clearly the word "debate"



is not in there. We can all jump to conclusions; it's very convenient to jump to conclusions. For example, this afternoon the Premier made a statement on this very issue. The opposition parties have responded. The Leader of the Opposition has responded. The member for Dovercourt, on behalf of the third party, has responded. There was consideration in this House. There was response in this House. Indeed, all the members of this House had the opportunity to raise questions, and several members did avail themselves of that opportunity to raise the matter and to pose questions.

Mr Speaker, I'm not sure where the words "consider and respond" are defined and I'm not sure if there's any precedent in this regard. We don't have that at this point in time, but I would submit to you that it certainly wouldn't be an unreasonable interpretation that the House has considered this matter this afternoon: the Premier himself, the Leader of the Opposition, the member from the third party and a number of members raising questions on this very matter, in this very House.

Does it say the matter must be debated? No. I don't see the word "debate." Does it say there must be some kind of written report or any particular report?

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** "Consider" means to reflect.

**Hon David Johnson:** The member for Lawrence says "reflect." Indeed the House did reflect on this situation this afternoon at great length, in terms of the statements, the responses, the questions. There was a considerable amount of House time spent on this issue this afternoon, at the most visible time of the proceedings of the House.

At the very least there should be some consideration of that, because I would suggest to you that there could be a very good case built that we have actually considered and responded to this report in this House on the very first day the matter was raised.

**The Speaker:** I will hear the submissions. I honestly think I've heard a lot of them and they've been good. I hear some repetition, so if we could just wrap this up, I'd really appreciate it. I want to go to the member for Algoma and then move around from there.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I appreciate the desire to deal with this expeditiously. We are not interested in prolonging this session, shall we call it.

In regard to the minister's submission, there are two problems with his submission, in my view. The first is that he makes it ignoring the fact that the House passed a motion last night dealing with the calendar. I submit to you, Speaker, that we cannot ignore that. Page 40 of the act, subsection 34(2) is clear. This matter must be dealt with by July 25 of this year.

No matter how the government wants to interpret this, it's clear what the words "consider and respond" mean in this House. It doesn't mean questions and answers. It doesn't mean statements and responses. All of us who have been in this assembly know what those words mean. By quibbling about those words, my disappointment is that the government appears not to want to comply with the law. Surely, if anyone would want to comply with the law, it would be the government of the province.

We have to consider and respond to the report 30 days hence. That's clear. Also, we must take into account the calendar motion. We have to deal with this by July 25.

We have today and tomorrow. The government must, if it's serious, make it clear to all the assembly members how we're going to comply with the law. They are either going to debate it today or tomorrow or some time before July 25.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands):** There are some further points I'd like to make, Mr Speaker. The first point is that we have to look at the preamble of the Members' Integrity Act. If I could read a portion of that, it states as follows:

"It is desirable to provide greater certainty in the reconciliation of the private interests and public duties of members of the Legislative Assembly, recognizing the following principles." These are the four principles upon which this act is based:

"1. The assembly as a whole can represent the people of Ontario most effectively if its members have experience and knowledge in relation to many aspects of life..."

Then it talks about the members' duty in paragraph 2, "representing their constituents' interests in the assembly and to the government of Ontario."

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In paragraph 3, it talks about maintaining the "assembly's dignity and justifies the respect in which society holds the assembly and its members."

It is the assembly that has the rights here; it is not the government, it is not a committee of the assembly. This act deals with how the assembly's rights, privileges and duties can best be responded to.

Section 34, as has already been indicated on numerous occasions, is quite specific. The plain meaning of the reading of this section can only mean one thing: "The assembly shall consider" — no discretion at all — "and respond to the report within 30 days after the day the report is laid before it."

For the government House leader to suggest that because the Premier has made a statement and there have been certain questions about it, without the report even having been made available at that point to the members of the assembly — not just to the House leaders, not just to the Premier, not just to the Leader of the Opposition but to the members of the assembly — and to regard that somehow as having given the matter full consideration is in my mind just not correct.

Let's take a look at what the word "consider" means in Black's Law Dictionary, sixth edition. It's quite clear. "Consider" is defined as: "to fix the mind on with a view to careful examination; to examine; to inspect. To deliberate about and ponder over." That is the definition contained in Black's Law Dictionary. It is not to allow a few questions to be asked and then just go on with the rest of the business of this House. No. It is to examine, inspect, to deliberate about and ponder. That means more than what the House leader has suggested here.

When you look at the reality of the situation, we have to do this as an assembly, not as a government, not as an opposition, not as a committee of this assembly, within 30 days of the day the report came here.

As a result of the motion last night, there are only two days to do it in: either today or tomorrow. I would respectfully suggest that you, as the upholder of the rules of the House, have to comply with the law. I know it's



highly unusual perhaps for a Speaker to in effect determine what gets discussed on a particular day. If we want to be within the confines of the law — and we certainly don't want to break the law; heaven knows it has been broken enough already when it comes to these kinds of issues around here over the last six months or so — then surely to goodness we should deal with it either today and tomorrow or tomorrow.

It's obviously our preference, because we don't know how long the debate is going to take, that the debate start as quickly as possible, which would allow for a maximum of seven hours today and possibly eight hours tomorrow, for a maximum of 15 hours of debate. This is a very serious matter. For anybody who doesn't think so, who thinks this is a matter that can be debated in a couple of hours, I would just remind you of some of the statements the commissioner has made.

The commissioner states, for example, "To bypass the Minister of Health is not only a failure to show proper respect for the minister but in the present situation it is a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention." We're talking now about parliamentary convention. That affects every member in this House, that parliamentary conventions in the province of Ontario are adhered to.

I would suggest that in order to give this matter the fullest amount of debate, the debate should start immediately and let it run its course. It may be over in an hour or two, or it may indeed take the 15 hours we've got left between now and the time when the House adjourns tomorrow at midnight.

May I remind you once again that standing order 10 is quite clear: that the discretion you have when you feel it's in the public interest, on the government's advice, to call the House back only comes into effect once the House is adjourned. This House is not adjourned, so you do not have that option available to you at this time.

I would strongly suggest that we start the debate on this, because this is more than just about one particular minister; it is really about the parliamentary tradition we have in this House. I think we should do whatever we can, collectively, to uphold that.

**The Speaker:** I've got two more submissions. I have the member for Dufferin-Peel and the member for Downsview, and then I'd really appreciate the opportunity to consider it, if that's okay. The member for London Centre?

**Mrs Boyd:** Very briefly.

**The Speaker:** Okay, and the member for London Centre, and then I'd really appreciate the opportunity to consider these many fine submissions.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** Mr Speaker, there appear to be two issues before you.

**Mr Len Wood:** Three issues: Runciman, Leach —

**Mr Tilson:** Give me a break.

There appear to be two issues before you, Mr Speaker. One is, what does subsection 34(2) mean? What does "consider and respond to" mean? Is it being suggested that we're considering and responding to the commissioner? Is that what is being suggested? I don't think so. I believe the intent of this act was that the commissioner submits his or her report to the assembly — it has been submitted — and that it just doesn't sit on that table for

an indefinite period of time. It's being suggested that the House must deal with it according to subsection 34(2). So preparing a formal report isn't necessary, which I think is being suggested, particularly by members of the opposition.

The fact of the matter is, we're having this debate now, which is essentially on the point of order, I believe, of the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Mr Wildman:** These are points of order.

**Mr Tilson:** There may be several points of order, but we are indeed considering it. We are also considering it: There has been a presentation made by the Premier, there has been a presentation made by a representative of the Liberal caucus and there has been a presentation made by a representative from the New Democratic caucus. You can take all the words from the dictionary meaning you want, but I don't know where anyone can get that interpretation, that the words "consider and respond" mean that the Clerk, through the Speaker, must prepare a formal report, a formal document, that must go back to the commissioner. Then what's the commissioner going to do with it? Clearly the intent is that this assembly must look at this thing, must consider it, and that is indeed what we're doing.

The second issue, of course, is the topic of days: What does "30 days" mean? I have made submissions on that, although I feel obligated, because of the comments that have been made since I spoke, to talk on the issue of days.

When you look at the Members' Integrity Act, the limitation periods that are spoken of are talked about in two kinds of times. One is with respect to a member. A member must file his or her report I believe within 30 days, and there's a rule for that. Then they start talking, for example, in section 30, about enforcement. Subsection 30(3), for example, says: "The member making the request shall promptly give a copy of it to the Speaker, who shall cause the request to be laid before the assembly if it is in session or, if not, within 10 days after the beginning of the next session."

There's another section too, clause 31(3)(c), which talks about the inquiry by the commission, which is what we're dealing with here. Clause 31(3)(c) says, "The Speaker shall...cause the opinion to be laid before the assembly if it is in session or, if not, within 10 days after the beginning of the next session."

All the references being referred to with respect to the assembly deal with sessional days. Why? Because you legally, with due respect, sir, have no legal ability but to talk about sessional days. You haven't the legal capacity to talk about calendar days. You simply don't have that authority. In other words, you could say, "We're going to consider and respond on day 1 or day 2." With due respect to you, we have 30 days. Even if you took the calendar, who's to say that you can force us to do that today? You can say, "Okay, we're going to come back some time in July," but you don't have that legal authority, because that's a calendar day, that's not a sessional day. I'm simply saying to you that the only legal capacity you have is to deal in sessional days, and sessional days, as defined by order 2, are the days on which this place is sitting.



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Those are the two other comments I make, just to summarize, to talk about the words "consider and respond." I say that has been done. That has been done now, that has been done with the Premier, the representative from the Liberal caucus, the representative from the New Democratic caucus. They have considered and responded. It has been dealt with.

If you say, "No, we need more than that," that will be an interesting challenge for you. Are you going to suggest: "You've got to have a week of debate. You have to have a week of something"? The bill doesn't talk about debate. The bill simply says "consider and respond." The next problem for you is, when are you going order us to do that? You can't order us to do it today. You can't order us to do it tomorrow. It talks about 30 days and I submit those are 30 sessional days. So we have today, we have tomorrow and, according to the motion that was passed last night, the limitation period continues when we return on August 18.

**The Speaker:** I have to seek a point of clarification from the member for Dufferin-Peel. You cited a couple of examples and I'd like you to clarify for me about sessional days being referred to in other parts of the act. It would stand to reason, and I put to you, if they were in fact speaking about sessional days in this part of the act, why would they not have stated it there like they did in the other sections?

**Mr Tilson:** That deals with specifically clarifying whether it's one or the other. You don't have a choice. You simply do not have a choice. You legally do not have a choice. You do not legally have a right to deal with something in a calendar day. These sections I referred to, sections 30 and 31, clearly talk about — not a choice as well. If you say, "Okay, I'm going to count up 30 days from now; we're going to have a debate, we're going to have a discussion," how are you going to do that? That's the third sessional day. We have today, we have tomorrow, and if you call it back, say, July 15 — I don't know what day of the week that is — that's a third sessional day and you're breaching the act.

**The Speaker:** On a point of order, the member for Downsview.

**Mrs Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** I'd like to respond briefly to the comments made by the member for Dufferin-Peel. First on the issue of the report, he's concerned that the assembly needs to consider this report and whom this report would go to. It is indeed true that the statute is silent with respect to that. I think the issue is irrelevant; it doesn't matter. I don't think we are required to report necessarily to the commissioner but I would submit that we are required to report to the assembly itself in this particular case.

The other issue I wanted to raise is "consider and respond," and my friend from Kingston and The Islands has cited for you the definition in Black's Law Dictionary which is very clear on what that would mean. The definition is clear. It says that we must consider, ponder, that we have to examine in depth. The only way we can do that in this assembly is through debate. There is no other way. We can't simply raise it in the House and say, "We've considered it; this is our response," and it's over

with. Our rules only provide for debate. I would submit to you that we have not had a debate here today. We have simply addressed the issue through a point of order. We've not had a full discussion of the issue.

The other point I want to make is with respect to the word "day," and you've already had quite a bit of evidence with respect to that. I pointed out to you before that if the statute meant to say sessional day, it would have said sessional day. You cannot import the language of another statute into this particular statute.

For clarity's sake, let me just read to you briefly from Black's Law Dictionary what a day is, and it's quite different from a sessional day. I won't read absolutely everything that's in here because it's a long definition. It says:

"A period of time consisting of 24 hours including a solar day and a night; the period of time within the limits of a natural day" — a natural day, not a sessional day — "set apart either by law or by common usage for the transaction of particular business or the performance of labour; in practice and pleading, a particular time assigned or given for an appearance, a return of a process" etc.

Nowhere does it say in the extended definition here that we are dealing with a sessional day as defined in our rules. That would be an artificial interpretation of this particular term and not applicable in this case.

The last thing I want to say to you, Speaker, is that there is an urgency with respect to this issue. You should look at this in every way as analogous to a ruling that you made with respect to a member who was found to be in contempt of this Legislature. You demanded that a motion be put forth immediately for you to consider. I would say to you that this situation is on exactly the same kind of ground. We have a report of the Integrity Commissioner that says a particular member of this assembly is in contempt, in a sense, of parliamentary tradition and in flagrant violation of those traditions, as indicated in the report, and moreover is found in breach of the act. I think you have no choice but to require immediate debate.

**Mrs Boyd:** Mr Speaker, I would draw your attention to part 1 of the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. In section 2 it defines what a sessional day is, and even though that is defined at every place as you go through our rules, it talks about sessional days. There is no such definition, if you look at section 1 of the act.

Quite clearly there are definitions there, and had the integrity law been expected to be referring to sessional days, I'm sure they would have defined it as such. I would encourage you to look at this. Under clause 31(3)(c) you are required to lay the opinion in front of "the assembly, if it is in session, or, if not, within 10 days after the beginning of the next session." That precedes section 34, and section 34 clearly means that if we are in session, then we must consider and respond to the report within 30 days, and if we are close to the end of the session, I would submit, within the period of time the session is going to be meeting. We passed a motion last night that ends our session at midnight tomorrow night and it seems to me very clear that the consideration of the report must be done within that period of time.



**The Speaker:** I'd like to thank all the members for their submissions. These are interesting and new points of order. I will give this place my undertaking that I will consider it all very carefully and report back today before 12 o'clock, I'm fairly certain long before 12 of the clock.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Will the House recess until then?

**The Speaker:** No, the House can certainly continue while I'm studiously considering all the important arguments that were made.

#### STANDING ORDERS REFORM (continued)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Member for Cochrane North.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** It's good to get back to further comments on the drastic rule changes that are being brought in by this government to curtail the debate the opposition parties would like to carry on in this House.

Some arguments coming from the government members are that some of the rule changes are designed around the House of Commons, but in the House of Commons in Ottawa there are 301 members. In this House, after the next election, there will only be 103 members.

There is no reason why we cannot allow proper time for government members, backbenchers, opposition critics on the different portfolios to be able to take the amount of time needed to debate the issues and make sure that not only the listening TV audience is well aware of legislation that is brought in but also that the media have a chance to analyse the legislation that's being brought in and have proper time to do the writeups and further make the public aware of the motions and the legislation that's there. It's quite obvious that if the government is concerned about the attitude and the way we dealt with Bill 26 to make sure it was out in the public, if the rule changes are being brought in to make sure that incidents of this kind will not happen in the Legislature, it won't stop the opposition parties from finding other ways and means of making sure the public is well aware of what is going on, I might point out again, in the Premier's office.

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Most of this legislation that is being brought forward — the attack on the workers in Bill 7 to scrap proper and good labour legislation, Bill 99, Bill 136, all these bills that are attacking the workers in this province and trying to turn the clocks back 50 years — is put together by a few people in Mike Harris's back office. They would like to be able to bring them through first, second and third reading to become law before the public has an opportunity to be aware of them, even so the media would not be able to do write-ups on them. I don't know why the government wants to limit the amount of time I would need to debate a piece of legislation that affects my particular riding.

I know and the people in northern Ontario know that back in January and February of 1995, before the last election, there was a committee of Conservative backbenchers, when they had third-party status, who were

travelling around northern Ontario saying they were going to protect and improve the roads and highways in northern Ontario, they were going to protect the railroads and airports, and now we see they've cut off the funding for all the airports in northern Ontario.

As a matter of fact, they even shut down the airline. I don't believe the government has received the \$15 million or \$16 million it was supposed to get by selling off the Dash-8 airplanes and the Twin Otter airplanes. They were still sitting on the ground not that long ago. From what I can gather talking to some of my people, the government might not have received that money yet. Instead, they shut down the government-run airline, which was giving good, efficient service into northern Ontario, and now we've gone to a fly-by-night private sector service that is not giving the coverage we need going into any places in northern Ontario.

The rule changes, the way I see them, are a matter of this particular government — first of all, I don't believe they have any desire to sit in this Legislature. They would like to have this Legislature out of the way. Government gets in the way of Mike Harris and his cabinet doing things in this province by downloading and dumping on to the municipalities, forcing municipalities to raise taxes so that a year or so down the road they'll say: "It's not us, even though we cut the northern support grants to all the municipalities in northern Ontario, which in some cases make up 40%. They're the ones who are raising the taxes. They're the ones who are putting on the user fees in order to keep from going bankrupt and forcing property taxes to go up."

There are a lot of people who would like to continue debating the rules, because I for one and our caucus don't believe there are any justifiable reasons for making rule changes at this time, other than —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** What about all those important bills they've had to pass?

**Mr Len Wood:** If they wanted to pass all these bills, they could have brought them in and had the proper debate. We're sitting until midnight now. This is the second week we're having midnight sittings, and we haven't seen all the bills. None of the bills have been brought forward that the government said it needed. They need them before the end of June.

We know that over the last two years — we're heading into the third year of this government now — the Mike Harris government has repeatedly demonstrated its disinterest in the Legislature and the democratic process. Today, for example, the Premier is saying, "My cabinet ministers make mistakes." They should be resigning. He should be asking for their resignations, and if they're not going to resign, he should be firing them.

There are three of them, especially one in particular, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who has broken the law. He's violated the law, a piece of legislation that is here involving the Integrity Commissioner, and the Premier is defending him. I'm sure we're going to be debating this particular issue probably into August and September or whatever. Mike Harris, as the Premier of this province, should be standing up and saying: "I have cabinet ministers who have violated the rules and regulations. They broke the laws and they will be replaced." We now have examples of at least three.



I'll give credit to the Minister of Health. When he was in violation, he resigned. He stepped aside and they had the investigation and a few months later he was put back into the cabinet. But Mike Harris is saying, "It doesn't really matter what my cabinet ministers do; I'm going to defend them at all costs." As a result now, people right across this province are laughing at Mike Harris as the Premier of this province. Even some of the Conservative backbenchers are laughing at him. I could see them chuckling today when Mike was up trying to defend some of the cabinet ministers, saying: "They make mistakes, but that's okay. We'll leave them here." It's a sad situation when you have a Premier who is taking that attitude. It's no wonder.

I was reading in the paper the other day where there were 60 or 70 people demonstrating and protesting at his private house in York Mills. The Premier lives out in York Mills, and I'm sure there are going to be thousands of people who will continue to protest the undemocratic process the Premier is forcing on the people in this province.

Rule changes are only one example. Most of the bills that are being brought forward are an attack on the municipalities, an attack on the working men and women in this province. One of the first acts they did was to take away food and shelter from the most vulnerable people, the women and children in this province, for no reason other than to give a 30% tax break to the wealthiest people in this province. A part of it is going to be on borrowed money; the other part is going to be taking the money away from the most vulnerable people.

Tomorrow morning is another act of aggression against the unionized workers in this province. It sounds to me like probably the Premier of this province wrote the resolution: "That in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should disallow the undemocratic requirement of mandatory fee collection by unions."

You talk about trying to pick a fight with groups of people out there. This is one way of picking a fight. I'm sure Mike Harris must have called Mr Fox into the office and said, "I want you to bring forward a resolution in private members' hour, and we'll deal with it from there." It's talking about how the government of Ontario should disallow the collection of dues.

Earlier in the day today as well as last night we were talking about budget bills, giving a tax break to the wealthy at the expense of municipalities and individuals. We talked about an individual getting between \$25,000 and \$30,000 a year who would get a tax break of \$450. As a result of getting that money, property taxes are going to go up if they own a home and all the user fees are going up. The cost of everything when they deal with municipalities — libraries, swimming pools, whatever — is going to go up. You put \$6, \$7, \$8 or \$9 into a pocket, and then the finance minister says to the municipalities, "You've got to go and take that \$8 or \$9 plus \$2 or \$3 more out of their pocket, because we're cutting off all the grants that were given to you."

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I was looking at some of the articles that have been coming out in the rural newspapers in the 905 region where some of the Conservative backbenchers figure they might be safe because that's where a majority govern-

ment could come from in the next election, but the newspapers are catching on to what this government is doing on rule changes and on other pieces of legislation. They're catching on and they're starting to write stories in the papers condemning the downloading and the dumping that is happening right across this province. Some of the commentaries are saying there's a time bomb ticking out there, that municipalities are going to have a very rough time to operate.

We know what's going to happen with the megacity in Toronto, where property taxes are going to increase. We don't know exactly how much yet, but we have different figures. We know that in northern Ontario, with the forcing of amalgamation and the reduction of the northern grants system for municipalities, taxes are going to go up anywhere from 25%, 30% or 40%. I mentioned earlier the city of Sault Ste Marie; they're going to lose \$13 million, and in order to collect that \$13 million they have to raise taxes.

We have a very aggressive government now. On top of that, they want to change the rules in this Legislature so the opposition will not have time to speak, will not have time to take the legislation back to their constituents and talk it over with them. There is going to be very little debate in the Legislature here. When Mike Harris decides there's some group of people out there that he hasn't attacked yet, when he has a dream some night and decides there is another group he'd like to attack, he's going to get his people together in the office and bring in a piece of legislation and attack another group of people. Now we find out, with the new rule changes, that legislation can be brought in for first reading, second reading and third reading, and it can be all done in less than one week. It's a sad situation when that happens.

You think people out there are happy with the 22 hospitals that are going to be closed down? When these hospitals start closing, imagine the pressure that is going to be brought on the Conservative members.

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** You closed 10,000 beds. What are you talking about?

**Mr Len Wood:** The member for Huron has lost control again.

Madam Speaker, at this time, I have a motion I would like to move. I move that the motion to amend the standing orders as amended by the House on June 24, 1997, be amended by deleting the following: those sections of the motion which amend standing order 9(c); those sections of the motion which amend standing order 24.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Wood, you have a few moments left.

**Mr Len Wood:** Thank you, Speaker. You're doing an excellent job making sure everything moves right along.

My concern and the reason for moving the motion is that under the proposed rules, for example, if I wanted to speak on Bill 26 and I was not the critic — I am not a critic for the Ministry of Health or any of the major ministries — by the time five hours of debate was completed, my time would be restricted to only 10 minutes. How can you deal with it, if we have legislation coming in similar to Bill 26?

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired.

*Report continues in volume B.*

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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

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# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 25 June 1997

Mercredi 25 juin 1997

Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 25 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 25 juin 1997

*Report continued from volume A.*

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## STANDING ORDERS REFORM RÉFORME DU RÈGLEMENT

Continuing the adjourned debate on the motion, as amended, for adoption of amendments to the standing orders.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I'm very happy to speak on this matter before the House regarding rule changes which can only be described as changes to the advantage of the governing majority in an attempt to silence the minority in this House. When you examine the changes that are proposed, time and again these changes speak to the need for the government to have everything in its arsenal to shut down debate.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I have requested from the NDP a copy of the amendment, and I believe they have now indicated they are going to get it to us. Thank you. As a courtesy, it's normally extended.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lawrence, you can continue.

**Mr Cordiano:** As I was saying, with regard to this government's every initiative, every time we turn around there's the government once again trying to ram something through this assembly by the cover of night.

I would like an opportunity to quote my House leader, who sits beside me. I would like to quote what he said back on June 29, 1992, which I think was very profound, and he repeated it in this House. He was talking about the rule changes that were being proposed by the previous government, Bob Rae's government. He suggested, "You make a judgement on people and on governments based not on what they do when they are under public scrutiny, when they can be caught, but on what governments and what individuals do when no one is looking."

That's what this government has attempted to do with these rule changes. When no one was looking, or when it appeared as though no one was paying any attention, they tried to sneak them in. I think what my House leader has suggested by way of those remarks is indeed profound. I'd say those were very wise remarks, because a government in a free and democratic nation such as ours, in a province such as ours, really is given the right to govern by the people of the province, given the right and their confidence and the trust. It's a solemn faith that you are given to govern, and if you betray that faith, then you have betrayed the people who have elected you and violated democratic principles and rights. You are certainly attempting to do that by muzzling the opposition, by muzzling all kinds of opposition. It's not just

about members in this House. It's not just about opposition members not having their opportunity to speak.

By the way, I would remind members that today we would not have had a question period, given what transpired. You could have delayed question period because at 4 of the clock time would have elapsed. Today is an example of such an occasion where question period would not have been held.

It's conceivable that the government, when it decides in its wisdom and when it's convenient and when it's to its advantage, will not have a question period. Today is a perfect example, a very controversial issue, an issue the government would not want to be held to account for, would not like to have the scrutiny of question period placed before it, and certainly the government would attempt all sorts of delaying tactics and would have debates of all manner.

So debate would have taken place today, I submit to you, in an effort to stall or delay question period. Once they reached 4 of the clock on that sessional day, then question period would not have been held. That is clearly what's possible under the new rules as proposed. That's what we find so offensive. Any opposition party and any opposition member, and in fact the back bench should find this offensive if they were anything of a real back bench.

If you were here to defend the interests of your constituents, you wouldn't be asking all those fluff questions you ask every day. At some point, when you decide it's your time to get re-elected and your government may not be as popular, you will wish you had the opportunity to ask really tough questions that matter to people in your ridings.

You're giving that right up under these rules. You're forsaking all that. You should be ashamed because your constituents will be asking you: "Where were you when this matter came up and you didn't ask the tough questions?" Question period is an opportunity for you, as a member of this assembly, a right and a privilege that you have as a result of your election to this assembly by your constituents, to ask the members of this executive council to be accountable. Also to you; don't forget that. You have every same right that members of the opposition have, so you shouldn't forget that. You have every opportunity to get up in this assembly to ask questions. If you choose to be wimps about it, there's nothing the opposition can do.

I say that in all sincerity. If you choose to squander those opportunities, then you are going to be held accountable by your constituents, and there's no way to get around it. As chagrined as you may be —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Huron, member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, come to order.



**Mr Cordiano:** Come on, you can't sit there and tell me that. Day after day we hear members get up and talk about the most unimportant matters, items that are not really questions but statements that any minister could stand up and make in a statement.

I say to my colleagues, isn't that the truth? Let's be honest about what happens here. Shouldn't we try to make this assembly a real functioning assembly? That requires that you stop being trained seals. That requires that you have the authority and the responsibility the people of this province expect you to have. Stop being trained seals. Stand up and be counted, because you're not being counted, you're part of the herd, you're falling in line and you're following executive decrees.

You will pay a price for that at the next election. You will, and any of us who do that pay a price because today the public I think is cynical because we don't have an assembly that functions in an autonomous fashion. We have too much executive power being placed on this assembly and overshadowing the assembly, by virtue of the fact that we elect people in the back bench on the government side who are just simply following the will of the cabinet. That's a real fundamental flaw in our system.

Speak of committees: These rule changes propose to reduce committees to nine from 11 — even less accountability and less opportunity for members to have a real say on what transpires. Important pieces of legislation — my God, you're moving at breakneck speed, and yet not one of you has stood up in this House to suggest, "Maybe it's proper for us to slow down and examine legislation that's going through this House, properly and in a timely fashion."

We haven't stopped for anything. You haven't stopped for anything, and as a result of that — and I remind members that Bill 26, as put forward by this government, would have been a major disaster, worse than it is now. You had 150 amendments made to Bill 26. There's no way we would have had that number of amendments put through if you rammed Bill 26 through this House without the opposition stopping it. There's absolutely no way you would have done that.

You're simply not recognizing the reality of this place. Do you know what? You've been here two years already, since most of you on the back bench got elected for the first time. You should have recognized by now that this assembly works best when you work on behalf of your constituents and when you're autonomous. I am not suggesting you vote against your own government on major pieces of legislation, but by God, you should stand up and suggest time and again that the rules are important, that you have an opportunity. Very few of you have stood up in this House to ask meaningful questions, or at all.

I suggest you should have greater opportunities, and you should have greater opportunities for autonomy in committees as well. These changes don't propose that. I see nothing of the kind here. In fact, your role is reduced and diminished. Is it any wonder the public out there is cynical about what we do in this place? No, they're cynical because you haven't recognized the need for what you do as important.

You're talking about changes. Let me point to some other changes. You're talking about expediting order paper questions, going from the right of the government to respond from 14 days up to 45 days. This government moves with lightning speed when it deems it convenient and advantageous. When members of the opposition or, I remind you, members of the back bench in the government put an order paper question, the government says it needs 45 days. Where is efficiency? Where is the requirement for efficiency at that point when it's not in the government's interest to do so?

Therefore, what are you suggesting? That the government should have 45 days. This government would like nothing better than for this assembly to run by executive decree alone — no debate, no proper consideration. "If we put in a piece of legislation and there are errors, we'll amend it later. We'll fix it up through regulation."

With the magnitude of change that is being brought forward by this government, I think we're going to pay a huge price down the road. Half of what you introduced has yet to be implemented and work its way through the system. There are going to be huge consequences for that. There is no organization out there in the private sector that hasn't attempted a reorganization or a restructuring and not realized before it was long that to move too quickly is to make haste, the haste that causes all kinds of inefficiencies and results in incredible waste down the road. That hastiness costs you down the road and I think that is something that with these rule changes we'll see more of in this province. That's what it amounts to.

There is a huge number of changes. To require that two sessional days be folded into one day — two sessional days could now under these rule changes be considered as one day, with one question period — I think is preposterous. Just be clean about this. Come forward and say: "We want less time for questions in this House. We want less time to be held to account. We want less scrutiny from the public. We've run into all kinds of problems when that has happened, Bill 26 being one of those situations, and megacity legislation."

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**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** We had time allocation on Bill 26.

**Mr Cordiano:** You had debate on that because we forced you to do that. Both NDP and Liberals forced the government to its knees. We did that by taking extraordinary measures in this House, something I would never, ever want to do again in this assembly. It is absolutely incredible that we would have a government that would under the cover of darkness attempt to sneak in all these nasty changes which would limit debate in this House.

The traditions and conventions of this place, of this great assembly, are such that they should not be forsaken. Some people have mentioned that these are similar changes to those in Ottawa. I would suggest to you that in Ottawa one of the salient features of the system is that the much-maligned Senate in this case works to the advantage of the House of Commons, where there is sober second thought, where Senators indeed have a chance to scrutinize very closely legislation that has been passed by governments that would move to expedite matters, by governments that would move to the disad-



vantage of the whole society, having overlooked something that was truly important. There are numerous cases I could point to where that was the case.

The hallmark of any democracy is to grant proper and due deliberation with regard to matters that are of great importance to all of society. In order to do that, I don't see the government suggesting that we're going to have, as a result of these changes, proper debate in this House and a sufficient amount of time granted to the pieces of legislation that are processed in this House. I don't see that there are any changes being proposed that would allow us to have a greater amount of meaningful debate in this assembly.

Isn't it interesting that once members who were in opposition moved to that side of the House, they changed their views with regard to the rules of this assembly? I would refer to the remarks of the current deputy leader. I want to quote what he said back on June 22, 1992. The current Deputy Premier, who was in opposition back then, said:

"I think one has to understand that the only way opposition — not just opposition members but any public opposition to any proposed piece of legislation — can be effectively dealt with or talked about under our system of government, under the parliamentary system of government, is through the opposition parties' ability to debate, and yes, on occasion even stall or slow down progress of a particular bill, and that has worked very effectively over the years against governments of all political stripes."

It's clear what the member for Parry Sound, now Deputy Premier, was suggesting. He was very clear. He was concerned that opposition members would not have the same privilege, the same opportunity to scrutinize the government, to allow for this slowing-down process so that sober second thought could take place by, yes, even the government members. On occasion, and there have been repeated occasions, governments have been found wanting with their pieces of legislation that have been brought forward, major gaffes. As I said, Bill 26 had at least 150 flaws in it that the government saw fit to amend. That's not just an errant example; that is a piece of legislation that required major surgery. There were many other instances where that occurred.

We're not just talking about getting rid of the nuisance that is the opposition and from time to time the delaying tactics that are being employed by the opposition parties. I can recall when we were in government it became quite annoying when the opposition — major filibusters on insurance, the member for Welland-Thorold held up the Legislature for 17 hours, I think it was. We didn't like it, but on second thought it allowed for greater consideration of the very important matter that was before us: greater debate, greater public awareness. There is a time for consideration of legislation and for debate to end. We have no quarrel with that. But these rules go well beyond that.

The most galling aspect of this is the ability of the government to delay question period to 4 of the clock, when in a sessional day question period will no longer be held as a result of reaching that time period, 4 of the clock on a sessional day. For opposition parties and opponents and critics of the government and interested

observers in the public, one of the hallmarks of our parliamentary government is question period, the ability for members of the opposition of different political stripes to ask members of the government, including the executive branch, to be accountable for their actions in a publicly assembled Legislature such as this.

In an assembly like this — which is not a hallmark of many other systems; the executive branch in the United States is not held to account by the legislative branch on a daily basis, as our system is — When you erode the ability for that kind of scrutiny, you're undermining our parliamentary democracy as we know it, parliamentary government. Therefore, it makes this assembly less relevant.

I think the frustrations will grow. You won't stop the opposition. You may silence some of us who sit in opposition, but you will not silence the people out there who oppose you. They will not stop voicing their concerns. They will not do that. If it's not in this assembly, it will be somewhere else: On the streets, on the lawns, in every part of this province there will be every struggle made for voices in the opposition, in the minority to be heard when they are displeased with this government.

That's what you're going to be faced with: more protests, more acrimony and less cohesion in our society. I hate to admit it, but that's what the end result of some of these changes will be. Yes, I'm probably exceeding the limits of what you might deem to be reasonable, but I think in a number of years, as this assembly becomes less able to be a forum for accountability, that will be the consequence down the road. That's a sad day for all of us in this province.

I can tell you this: The next time we find a way to delay the government — for every rule, there's a way to get around it — you're going to tighten the rules again. When is this going to end? When do we all agree as legislators that there's some reasonableness required here, that there's reasonableness to recognize the role of the individual member regardless of what party he or she belongs to, and that there is something to be said about that role of the individual member, that it respects the institutions of our democracy, that it respects the rights of his or her constituents to be heard through that member in this assembly? That's what we're talking about. When you deny that, you're denying the right of those people to have a voice.

1750

Someone should do an analysis, and I think this might not be a bad idea, of how often members in the government back bench are given the opportunity to speak in this House. We're going to do this. We're going to show your constituents in each of your ridings that you're not really effective because you're not voicing their concerns, you're not speaking in this assembly.

It's to your disadvantage not to have greater opportunities to speak in this assembly. Opposition members are going to use that against you — I will — and I think it behooves you to make the case with the Premier that this is unacceptable, that these changes will limit your ability to function as you should as a duly elected, independent, thinking member of this assembly, regardless of whether you're on the government side or on the opposition side.



There are fewer and fewer opportunities for members to have their say in this assembly or on committee. I can recall a time when we used to have all kinds of committees sitting before, select committees on any number of important matters. I don't think we have a select committee sitting now. I could be mistaken, but there isn't one sitting currently.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** There hasn't been one for a long time.

**Mr Cordiano:** There hasn't been one for many years. Is that not a reflection of what we think of ourselves, that we simply don't find it important enough to have members who are knowledgeable, who are capable, who are duly elected to deal with matters of importance? Don't tell me that there aren't important issues to be examined these days, more now than ever. Yet you sit there and there isn't one select committee enabling you to do the kind of work that I think members of the public province-wide would find most useful.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I'm sorry. It's just that so much is being said here and yet the government has failed one more time in their responsibility to satisfy the assembly with a quorum. The House is not duly constituted. Quorum call, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Lawrence.

**Mr Cordiano:** It is indeed unfortunate that this matter is not being taken seriously by all members of the government. The only thing that's being taken seriously is the fact that the government House leader has suggested to the back bench: "This is a nuisance. We need new rules that will effectively deal with those terrible opposition members who delay and cause everything to be debated, cause everything to be properly considered. We don't want to have proper debate in this House." It's unfortunate.

It's unfortunate because we talk about rules around this place and today the Premier suggests that there's nothing wrong with the way in which the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing conducted himself, this after the Integrity Commissioner found him to be in breach of the integrity act. Now the Premier says, "Well, there's no requirement to do anything because he did not impose a penalty."

The Integrity Commissioner is suggesting that the Premier deal with this. He properly suggested that there is no penalty to be imposed under the act but that the Premier should have a set of guidelines to deal with cabinet ministers who violate those guidelines. I haven't heard the Premier suggest that he's got a set of guidelines that are being followed by his ministers. He doesn't have any.

Again, the question of rules being left to the interpretation of a government brings us to the ridiculous extreme where in the face of what's clear evidence, in the face of a determination made by an independent third party such

as the commissioner on integrity that would suggest that a minister of the crown is in violation of the integrity act, then of course the Premier is left to interpret that because he has no guidelines. In this case, the Premier saw fit not to have guidelines, so he is able to interpret whatever he wants.

I would suggest that the rule changes do much the same thing. They allow for the government to virtually do what it wants. It is a sad day indeed in Ontario because there will be less accountability, less scrutiny of this government, less ability for the public to have its say, fewer opportunities for those voices of dissent. The right to respond will have been denied to the people of this province, and that is indeed a sad thing for all of us. Shame on the government.

**Mr Wildman:** I want to enter this debate to speak to the amendments that have been put forward by my friend for Cochrane North. It's a rather straightforward amendment and I want to preface it by saying that we have before us an already amended motion from the government which goes on for over 16 pages, which amends many, many rules, essentially rewrites the standing orders and changes the way this House will operate not just in the near term, for the next few months or the next couple of years. I predict that if the rule changes pass, they will remain in place unless I suppose a minority government is elected.

If there is a minority, then it might be possible that such a government would agree with the other parties represented in the House to revise the rules to properly serve all of the members of the House and the public of Ontario. But if majority governments are elected, I predict that unfortunately these rule changes probably will not change because majority governments are tempted to maintain such rules because it causes them a lot fewer problems.

We know that in 1992, the last time the rules were changed, there was a long period of negotiation among the three House leaders. The member for Parry Sound, when he sat in this same seat as I do, as the House leader for the third party, was involved in those negotiations. One of the rules of this government is now attempting to change is the rule that was suggested by the member for Parry Sound during those negotiations, and the government of the day accepted that rule. That is the rule that prohibits a government from introducing new legislation in the last two weeks of a session and allowing that legislation to be passed through to third reading. The rule allows the government to introduce a new bill for first reading but it can't proceed beyond that stage in the last two weeks. This government now is trying to change what is often called the Ernie Eves rule in this House.

**1800**

I want to speak specifically to the amendment, but before that I want to say something that I think is of concern to most of the members of the assembly who support the government but are not in the executive council. I think a lot of those members are concerned about the fact that they don't get to speak in debates as much as private members who are on this side of the House. That is a problem in every majority government. It's been a problem for this government, it was a problem



when we were in government, it was a problem when the Liberals were in government. A majority, particularly a majority that wants to get bills through quickly, tends to limit the number of government members who can speak in a debate because they want to get the bill through quickly. They're less interested in debate than they are in getting the law passed. That's what's wrong with these rule changes: They limit debate.

One of the things that has been suggested might enhance the role of private members is the fact that after five hours of debate, according to the government's motion, members will be limited to 10 minutes each. The idea apparently is twofold: (1) to try to make it possible to get things through more quickly; and (2) to allow government backbenchers more opportunity to speak. It would have both effects.

It may be too facile for me to say this, but I will anyway: One of the ways the government could give more opportunity for government backbenchers to speak under the current rules is simply not to try to rush things through so fast. They could allow government members to speak for 30 minutes, if they wish, or for whatever amount between one minute and 30 minutes, if they weren't trying to get it through in three days, which is what has become the norm here: two or three days' debate. If they wanted to allow two or three weeks, then they would be able to get —

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Wildman:** The government members react by saying, "Two or three weeks?" as if that's unreasonable. It is not unreasonable, not at all. We are here representing the public of Ontario. There are some people who watch the sessions every day but they are a very small minority. The vast majority of people do not really pay rapt attention to what is happening in this assembly. The only way they hear about what's going on is if there's enough time for this to become a matter of debate in the media, whether it's radio, television or the press, and they then talk about it, they read about it, they see it on television, they talk to their friends, they talk to their service organizations and the other groups they belong to. It usually takes a few days before it becomes a matter of public concern, if it's a matter of debate in this assembly.

As members, we will go home on a Thursday night or a Friday morning. We will meet with representatives of the various organization in our constituencies. They will talk to us. But under the rules as proposed here, even the amended rules, it would be law by then. What kind of public debate is that? If the law is introduced on Monday, it can be passed by the end of the week.

That raises all sort of other problems too, of course. If you do things quickly, you make mistakes. That's one of the elementary things you learn as a child: If you do things too quickly without enough thought, you make mistakes. One of the reasons for scrutiny and debate is to determine whether or not there should be amendments to bills and changes to bills that might make them better or avoid errors.

If you try to rush things through, you're not going to have the opportunity for that and you're going to be doing things like you're now having to do with the megacity bill. You're going to have to come back later

and bring in another bill to amend the one you passed, because you screwed it up.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bernard Grandmaitre):** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.  
*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Algoma to resume debate.

**Mr Wildman:** I must say I'm disappointed that people didn't rush in to hear me, but I understand that some of them may want to have food for the body as opposed to food for the soul.

I want to say one other thing: I really do agree with the previous speaker, the member for Lawrence, who said that there should be some real effort and concern about looking at how this place operates to ensure there is a role for private members on committees. Unfortunately, the committee system in this House has deteriorated. It never was very good but it has deteriorated to the point where particularly in majority Houses the government members on the committee simply act like a bunch of trained seals or a group from the Kremlin who just raise their hands like this and vote a certain way and never independently consider issues. It's really unfortunate.

#### *Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Wildman:** I know the members don't think we're serious about this debate, but we are. I've raised these concerns about the way committees operate for many years. The only time in the 22 years I've been in this House that I've found committees are effective is when we have minority governments. That's the only time when committees are effective because it forces the members of all the parties on committee to actually listen to what the people who come before the committee have to say and to respond and to work with each other. It forces them to.

I don't see why that couldn't be the case in a majority government, if the government — and I'm not being partisan about this, I'm talking about all governments — wanted to release their members and give them the freedom to actually act as independent members of Parliament on committee. But they never do; they always whip the committees. It's gotten to the point now where there is a whip appointed for the government members on each committee.

1810

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** Oh, not just the government members.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm not being partisan about that. I'm talking about all governments. When I first came here that wasn't the case. They didn't whip the committees. Sometimes governments were pretty angry when committees didn't do what the cabinet wanted them to do and there were lots of arguments in caucus about it afterwards. It didn't happen very often, but it did happen.



There were lots of arguments about it, but I think that was a better system than we've got today.

The amendments put forward by my friend the member for Cochrane North amend two of these many rule changes proposed by the government in this motion. The amendment says that all the sections of the motion dealing with standing order 9(c) should be deleted and that the section of the motion that amends standing order 24 should be deleted.

Let me explain a couple of things about this: The reason we've put forward the motion is that this change to the standing orders proposed by the government would change the number of minutes members have to speak. I would hope that as a result of the discussions last night the government House leader and his colleagues are serious about actually talking about amendments to the proposal of the government. We are putting forward our view here; the government has put forward its view in the motion. If there are serious negotiations, perhaps we might end up somewhere in between. Maybe. That's if the government is serious about negotiations.

We are saying no change: 90 minutes for leadoffs, half an hour for speeches after that. The government is saying: "No, no. We want 40 minutes for leadoff, 20 minutes for speeches after that up to five hours, and then 10 minutes after that." If, and I underline the word "if", we're serious about negotiations, maybe by August we'll end up somewhere in between. We'll see. I'm afraid, though, that we will come back with what is in the motion now and a time allocation motion to get it through. But I hope we're into real negotiations.

We are putting forward a change dealing with standing order 24. Standing order 24 is the one that deals with the minutes, which I've just dealt with, and I don't need to go on at any length on that, but I want to deal now with standing order 9(c).

According to this amendment put forward by the government, the government would now be able with notice, because of the amendment the government brought forward, to extend the hours beyond 6. In putting forward our amendment, I want to make clear that we are not opposed to that. We're prepared to talk and negotiate, if we're into serious negotiations with the government, about extending into the evening if the government thinks it needs more time to deal with issues and deal with whatever the debate is.

We also understand that the government is saying that if they extend the hours they will not be able to debate, under the amendment they put forward, the same thing in the evening that they debate in the afternoon. We understand that is a concession from the government. We don't think it goes far enough, though, and I'll explain why.

The problem with this whole proposal is not the extension of the hours. We're not trying to limit the number of hours the government can sit if they wish, although I must say, and I say this sincerely, I have seen many evening debates in this place. The members who were not elected before 1995 haven't seen as many as I have. They've seen some, though, in the last few days, in the last few weeks, and I think if they were really being frank, they would agree with me that those evening sessions are not necessarily the most productive.

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** You mean like now.

**Mr Wildman:** Obviously that member is not taking anything I'm saying seriously; I'm putting it forward in a serious fashion. I don't think they are very productive, but if the government wishes to extend the debate into the evening, that's fine with us. That's not our objection to the government's proposal. Our objection is trying to have two days for one, to count the evening session as a separate sessional day. If you want to just extend the day, fine, extend it to midnight, extend it to 2 am, whatever you like, particularly now that you have to give us notice. That's fine, but you can't count it as a separate sessional day.

The reason for that is simple. What the government is attempting to do is to get legislation through more quickly. They try to pretend that they're trying to protect the rights of the individual members. But they aren't; they're trying to get things through more quickly. If they get things through in six days, two bills in six days, which is what this means, there's no time for public debate and public involvement, public input into the process.

The government says: "Wait a minute. We didn't just think this up out of the blue; we got this from the British Columbia Legislature. They can do that in British Columbia." It's true they can. The government ignores a couple of things though. First, they ignore the fact that if they're going to have two sessional days in one day in British Columbia, in that Legislature you have two question periods.

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** They have 15 minutes for question period.

**Mr Wildman:** I knew somebody was going to raise that. The government then says, "Wait a minute. The question period in British Columbia is only 15 minutes," but they ignore a very important factor. The Speaker mentioned this to me the other day because he's aware of this. Do you know how long the question period in British Columbia averages? It's 45 minutes. Do you know why? The reason is that the clock only counts the questions, not the answers. They run the clock differently in British Columbia. So when everyone around here keeps saying, "A 15-minute question period," that's not true. They have 45 minutes, on average. It's not as long as ours, ours is about an hour, but it's not 15 minutes.

If the government members have been told in their caucus that they only have 15 minutes in BC, they're not telling you the whole truth. The question period in British Columbia operates quite differently than it does here. First off, they only have about 50 members, so there are a lot fewer members.

**Mr Rollins:** We'll get it down to that.

**Mr Wildman:** Well, they have a lot smaller population too, of course.

It's rather interesting: On both sides of the aisle in British Columbia, the leaders don't sit on the front row. So I don't know what they mean when they say "back-benchers" in British Columbia because the leaders sit in the back. That's another interesting point. So I guess when they say they're trying to protect the rights of



backbenchers in British Columbia, we know who they're really trying to protect.

There are differences there. You can't just transfer things from one place to another. There may be things we can learn from the British Columbia experience, but don't allow — I don't think the government House leader would do this. I have a tremendous amount of respect for him. We get along very well. We have disagreements, but on a personal basis we get along. I don't think he would tell the members of his own caucus anything but the complete truth. So he must have told you that question periods in British Columbia are 45 minutes. He must have told you that, because if he told you they were only 15 minutes, he wasn't telling you the whole truth.

In actual fact, the question period in British Columbia is 15 minutes shorter on average than ours is each day. But if they extend the House hours in British Columbia and have two sessional days in one calendar day, they have two question periods. So when the government here says, "We're just bringing our rules in line with some of the other assemblies in Canada and the House of Commons," they aren't. If they were really bringing us in line with that rule in British Columbia, they would have said, "Two question periods," and they didn't.

1820

**Mr Pouliot:** What's a quorum in British Columbia?

**Mr Wildman:** I don't know that answer. At any rate, I think it's important for us to recognize — we are saying here you can't force things through, two bills in six days. That's not enough time for public debate, it's not enough time for people to be informed about what's going on and to be able to have input. The government can't do this.

The government House leader has told us that was not the intention of the government when they brought in this rule change. If that wasn't the intention of the government, what was their intention? That hasn't been made clear. If you can't tell us what other reason you have for doing this, then we in the opposition can only assume that the reason you're doing it is to force things through in a rush.

The thing that really gets me about this whole proposal is that I have honestly yet to meet anyone in this province who thinks that this government is moving too slowly.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Would you please have a quorum checked. I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the Clerk verify the quorum, please.

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker. *The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Will the member for Algoma please resume debate.

**Mr Wildman:** I know that the members opposite don't think the current rules are acceptable; that's why they've moved a motion to change the rules. You'll notice that when we moved an amendment, we didn't move an amendment dealing with every one of these 17 pages of rule changes. There are 17 pages of rule changes that the government has proposed, and we've only suggested

amending two of them. If we were being unreasonable, I suspect we would have gone through these proposed rule changes and amended every one of them. Think about it for a minute. The fact that we have proposed only two amendments may indicate —

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** What are they?

**Mr Wildman:** They're before the House. Check with the Clerk.

That may indicate that we might be prepared to accept a number of the other amendments. Did you ever think that? Did you ever think that we might be serious about discussing this?

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** Nobody ever does.

**Mr Wildman:** You don't seem to be serious about it. I don't understand why the members of this House can't approach something that is going to affect the way this House operates, that affects every member in this place —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wildman:** I didn't say delete all of the amendments. There are actually four or five amendments that we have a lot of problems with, but there are two that we cannot accept as they are proposed. If you want to have further discussion about them and you want to get somewhere between where you are at in your proposal and where we are at in our amendment, then let's have that discussion, but just don't say, "It's our way or the highway." Don't say, "You've got to agree to these. We've got 82 members and we're going to get these through whether you like it or not," because this doesn't affect just the members of the House who are here now. These rule changes affect the way we as members of the House can represent the people who sent us here.

**Mr Murdoch:** You sort of did, though.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Grey-Owen Sound, please.

**Mr Wildman:** You know there were discussions and significant amendments. If the member had been present previously when I was speaking, he would know that I talked about the contribution of Ernie Eves to those amendment changes.

I would just say this: These amendments that we have put forward should highlight for the members of the government and for the government House leader at least — because I suspect that his staff is listening to this — should alert them about the two areas in particular that we have significant problems with and where we want to see the ability of this government to move: the number of minutes that members have to speak and the attempt to have two sessional days for one calendar day.

I will get back to the role of Ernie Eves in the 1992 discussions. The member for Parry Sound has been quoted in this House by myself and others to the effect that he said if a government, any government — he was talking about our government at the time, but he was referring to any government — moves forward unilaterally with rule changes, it will make the assembly a very acrimonious place. That applies today just as it did then. That's why we did not move forward unilaterally with rule changes in 1992. The other thing he said, which I



think is very important, is if you tighten the rules so tight that members of the opposition don't have an opportunity to bring forward their views and to try to limit or slow down the government when they think that's necessary, it will slow down the whole process.

I don't think the members opposite understand that the effect of their rule changes will be this if they go through as they are: You'll be able to get controversial bills through more quickly. You'll be able to do that with these rule changes. But mark my words, every other non-controversial bill will take longer, because it will be an acrimonious place, and you know that the limits for debate in the House will become the minimums. If there were a bill put forward like the House calendar motion or the Waterloo bill or if there was a request for unanimous consent on something, it wouldn't happen. There will not be any unanimous consent ever agreed to, and sometimes the government needs that.

The Waterloo bill will not be passed in one afternoon, second and third reading requiring unanimous consent. We did that here because we were being cooperative and we wanted to get a good bill through. If the government does this to the opposition, mark my words, that won't happen any more. You'd have three days' debate on the Waterloo bill as a minimum.

1830

Sure, you might be able to get something like the megacity bill through more quickly. You'll note that I didn't object, we didn't try to amend the proposal to be able to group amendments. Frankly, we expected that was coming. You want to do that? Fine. We achieved something with that particular strategy at that point. You want to close that off to us now? We're prepared to accept that. But we will indeed find another one.

This is something that Ernie Eves said in 1992 that is of significance: "It doesn't matter what the rules are if there isn't cooperation in the House. Without cooperation and respect, things will grind to a halt." The members of the opposition will find ways of getting around the rules and the tighter the rules are, unfortunately, the more bizarre will be the tactics resorted to.

If the rules are so tight that the opposition can't exercise its responsibility within the rules, they go outside of the rules. We've seen that in this House. That was one of the reasons the government caucus is so upset. What we did in the megacity bill was within the rules. You're now trying to close that off. Okay, fine. What happened on the night that there was an abstention was outside the rules. There will be more of those unless you agree to real negotiation.

**Mr Young:** Speaker, I am holding a copy of one of the best speeches ever delivered. It's a speech which holds a very important place in history, a speech which has probably meant more to a larger number of people than any other single speech in history, with the possible exception of the Sermon on the Mount, a speech that has been quoted from, read and re-read. It's a living testament to a great thinker and leader and a nation rededicated to freedom.

This speech is so powerful that I could read the first six words and most people in Ontario will know immediately what it is: "Fourscore and seven years ago." It's the

Gettysburg address, delivered by Abraham Lincoln at the dedication of the Gettysburg cemetery, November 19, 1863, delivered in plain view of fresh graves of young soldiers who fought the bloodiest civil war in history. This speech elevated the suffering and found the birth of freedom, it found meaning in destruction.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think Mr Lincoln would have appreciated a quorum and so would this member.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Halton Centre, please resume debate.

**Mr Young:** Thank you, Speaker. This speech elevated the suffering and found meaning in the destruction. The meaning was a new birth of freedom and government of, by and for the people. The length of this speech? Less than three minutes, 274 well-prepared, thoughtful words, weighted with meaning.

I appreciate having the opportunity to speak on this issue. Only two years ago I first took my seat in this House on behalf of the people of Halton Centre. Since that time, I've spent a lot of time listening. I have listened very carefully to what's going on in this place. I've heard the ministers' statements and other responses to questions which were important and enlightening. I've even heard some good questions over the months.

I've also learned. I learned that much of what goes in here is unfortunately a big act: political theatre for the visitors, grandstanding and mugging for the cameras. I've watched adults, the members, act like children and I've watched children, the pages, act like adults. I've seen nine and a half days, 24 hours a day, of purely frivolous activity, the reading of repeated silly amendments with 10,000 street names attached. Then I saw our Speaker stand up and say straightfaced that it wasn't frivolous.

Along with my colleagues, I have been called by the opposition members beside me here a, "Nazi," "dictator," "jackboot," and I've watched as repeated, insincere, absurd points of privilege held up the business of the government of Ontario, the welfare of 10 million people, for days. I've seen the opposition members stand in their place and reluctantly drone on and on, without any real purpose except to waste time, for up to an hour and a half.

For what purpose do we endure all this? In my view, to hold up our government and our democracy to mockery. What an incredible gift we are squandering. One third of the world's population would give anything to live in Ontario, to have the opportunities and the freedoms we have and, of course, the most important freedom of all is freedom of speech. Yet we abuse this wonderful right.

Why do we speak in this place at all? What are the reasons? What is the benefit of debate? Isn't it supposed to be a real exchange of ideas? Isn't debate supposed to utilize persuasion and reason to lead us to better government? We now have better government, but we do not have better debate. The quality of the spoken word is too



often denigrated in this place. Quality is sacrificed on the altar of quantity, time allotment and partisan positioning.

I have often looked up to the gallery to watch the puzzled, disillusioned faces of our citizens, the taxpayers, sitting in stunned silence, wondering what on earth is going on. We stop them at the door to the gallery. They're searched, asked to leave behind their handbags and coats and the whole process adds up to the mystique of the parliamentary system. They enter feeling, no doubt, they are about to witness something profound: the seat of democracy, the home of freedom, the forum of truth.

What do they see instead? They see some uninspired opposition member talking and watching the clock for up to 90 minutes, clearly without useful purpose, except to take up time in the House. So when I see our new rules will allow more members to speak on a bill and allow them six and a half times that three historic minutes required to deliver the Gettysburg address, I'm very pleased. I say to my colleagues, if you can't say it in 20 minutes, for goodness' sake, sit down and let someone else try.

Having said that, and having taken only 10 minutes, I will take my own advice and sit down.

1840

**Mr Michael Brown:** Usually I say it's a privilege to take part in the debate. In this one, I don't feel any great sense of privilege. I feel as if we're living in a world where the privileges are about to be taken away from we who serve in this Parliament.

I've been here for about 10 years and during that time I guess I've seen two or three changes in the rules. It has always been my view that this place started to go downhill the day we decided we would limit members' ability to speak. That's really what this is all about. It used to be, when I first came here, you could speak for 90 minutes, you could speak for 17 hours, you could speak for 10 minutes, you could speak for an hour. It didn't matter. If you had something to say, you could say it.

When was it that governments got in trouble? It wasn't because someone spoke for two and a half hours or 15 minutes or 10 minutes or five minutes. Governments got in trouble in this place when they wanted to allocate the total time allowed to speak. If you would look over the period of the last 10 years and see when there was difficulty in this Legislature, it was always when a government was using something we euphemistically call "time allocation." That means the total House has less time to speak.

What happens when there is less time to speak? I remember Bill 26: time allocation. Government members, members of the Liberal Party and the members of the New Democratic Party were not permitted an opportunity to speak to Bill 26. It was an important, critical bully bill imposed on the people of Ontario but the government decided on Bill 26 that they would not permit members to speak. It didn't matter whether it was 20 minutes, it didn't matter whether it was two hours, you weren't going to be allowed to speak. It didn't matter whether you were a Liberal, a Progressive Conservative, a New Democrat or my friend from Elgin, an independent, you weren't going to be allowed to speak.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I count only 12 members in the House. I believe that's not a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the Clerk please check for a quorum.

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker. *The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Algoma-Manitoulin to resume debate.

**Mr Michael Brown:** It's very nice to see the members coming out to hear what I have to say about this particular issue.

As I was saying before we called the government members to maintain the quorum, which they are required under our rules to do, it seems to me that as each government tightens these rules, and I guess they've probably all been guilty since John Robarts on, what has happened is the individual member's control of his ability to speak in debate, hopefully to convince people of his or her position, has been steadily and irretrievably lost.

To me, that has brought about a situation in this House that is truly unfortunate. It causes opposition parties, who believe that the public needs to know what the legislation is about — we cannot just ram the thing through this Legislature in two or three or four days. The public has a right to know what a bill is about. Indeed, members have a right to fully understand what a bill is about before they debate it. This might seem unusual to the people who are outside, but I will say quite honestly that many members, when it comes to second reading debate, if it comes quickly, don't really fully understand the implications of that piece of legislation.

We have at any given time 130 or 140 pieces of legislation before us, many of which are extraordinarily complex. People around this province have various views about them, and we have not had time to not only read but understand and to canvass the opinions of our constituents on what this bill means to them. Because at the end of the day that's what governments do: They pass laws that impact on those people in Elliot Lake, in Espanola, Spanish, in Massey, on Manitoulin. Indirectly and directly, it affects those people somehow. There's virtually nothing we do here that eventually doesn't impact upon them in some particular way.

There are a lot of unintended consequences. Virtually no one passes a law around here or even suggests a law that's going to do something bad, but often in your mission of trying to do something "good," the bad side causes more trouble and you do more inappropriate things than you fix. We all know that and that's why it's important when we're considering legislation to take some time to think about it. That's why it's so important for the members of this Legislature to have the opportunity to debate.

It is not a terribly efficient way. This place is dysfunctional. There are 130 of us from all over the province of Ontario, from 130 different backgrounds, I dare say, representing a huge number of views. We come together in a place and are supposed to somehow on a given piece of legislation, perhaps in three days under these new



rules, come to a consensus and say, "Yes, that's good," or, "That's bad." That's absurd, plain absurd. Democracy was never meant to be "efficient." It was meant to provide the people with a government and the laws that make the place work.

1850

These new rules keep the people of Ontario — because it is the people of Ontario. When I stand here to speak, I represent my constituents. Some of them write me and say, "Gee, that wasn't exactly what I wanted you to say," and that's the real world, but I try my best to represent what they would think of an issue, as we all do; sometimes well, sometimes not so well, but we give it our best effort.

If what you're telling me is that what we need is less debate — and that's what this means. It means less debate. It means less opportunity to discuss the issues that are important. It means that the opinion of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner this morning could not be debated to the same extent that it would be under the rules. This is an extraordinary ruling by the Integrity Commissioner. He said that a minister of the crown, a minister of this government has flagrantly breached the rules, the law. I think the people's representatives should have something to say when a member of this place, and most especially a minister of the executive council, has flagrantly breached the laws of this province — not a standing order of the House but the laws of the province. We know there are at least two other ministers in this executive council who have done the same thing.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We again do not have a quorum in this House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you please check for a quorum.

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.  
*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Algoma-Manitoulin to resume debate.

**Mr Michael Brown:** As I was saying, we have before us a report from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. We want to debate that because we are required to debate that. The statute says we must debate this report, a report that says a minister of the crown flagrantly breached the law.

We should get to talk about this, because quite astoundingly, this government and Mr Harris have refused to take any action over this at all. Regardless of their inaction, regardless of their apparent disregard for parliamentary tradition and the traditions of this particular Legislature, they intend to just bully this one on through too. Bully is the style: "If we don't like the way the place is going, we bully the change in the rules. If we don't like the ability of the health care system to do what we want it to do, we're going to bully it. We're going to appoint through Bill 26, the bully bill, a health restructuring commission that will do the bullying for us without the normal restrictions you would find through the legislative process."

Time and time again you find the government moving quickly, without thought, into areas that you would

wonder, if you had ever read the Common Sense Revolution, they were moving into at all. Nevertheless, that's the style, and that's the reason the opposition needs to have the ability to talk.

If we have the ability and government backbenchers have the ability to speak during debates — and I'm always amazed at how little time the government back bench takes to speak in these debates. The House leader and Mr Baird, the member for Nepean, say that the back bench over there doesn't get a chance to speak. Why the heck don't they get a chance to speak? They get a rotation just the same as everyone else in this Legislature. Every three times, it's a Conservative. What happens during the debates? They don't get up. Do you see them get up? I don't see them get up. We have more debates around here where the official opposition speaks, the third party speaks and nobody over there speaks, and somehow it's our fault that the back bench of the government doesn't speak.

They have the same opportunity we have, exactly the same, as we go around. They get 90-minute lead speeches at the moment. We get 90-minute lead speeches. There's no difference — none. You get the same amount of time to speak in the debates as the opposition does. It's exactly the same right now. The fact that you don't take advantage of it, the fact that you don't use it is no one's fault but yours. Somehow you say: "It's the opposition's fault. We've got to change the rules."

Why are they changing the rules? Because they don't want the people of Algoma-Manitoulin to be heard here. They don't want the people of St Catharines or Cornwall to be heard. They don't like what we have to say sometimes and they don't want to defend themselves. They won't get up in the debate. What they want to do is not have a debate. They would be much happier if this place didn't exist. I think Mr Harris would be much happier if his cabinet didn't exist. I think he'd just like to run it out of that corner office, and that's pretty much the way it goes right now anyway.

I see my friend from Grey-Owen Sound here. He no doubt can attest to some of the things I'm saying. I'm sure he will be up speaking in this debate in the next rotation after our friends from the third party. I'm sure Mr Murdoch, the member for Grey-Owen Sound, will have some words to say about these rule changes and how they affect the back bench of the government participating in the debate. The fact is that his whip won't let him get up to speak. That is the problem. It isn't the opposition, it isn't the length of speeches; it is the under-the-thumb control of Mike Harris and the whiz kids down in the corner office.

Who is going to pay the price? It isn't the opposition. I think I heard a member in here earlier say, "The opposition will figure out another way." If they believe the public does not appreciate what the government is doing, if they believe the public needs a little more time to comment on it and convey their views to the government, the opposition will do something to slow things down. It will happen. I don't know what it will be, but it will happen.

Oppositions don't do nutty things. We're serious people over here. We would just as well prefer not to

stand and read the lakes and rivers into the Hansard of the province. We would just as soon not do that. We don't want to do silly things like stand and read all the lakes and rivers alphabetically into the record of the province and hold up the government. We don't want to do that. But you know what? Mike Harris did it, because he thought public opinion was not on the side of the government. He thought the public of Ontario needed some time to understand what the government was up to and certainly that public opinion would give the government the message that they should back off. So you read all the lakes and rivers for hours and hours, I think days. He did it, but he did it because he believed it was his only option under the rules at that time to slow the place down just long enough so that the people of Ontario can understand what a particular government, whoever the government might be, is up to.

1900

I think that oppositions don't want to do that. I serve in a caucus where until relatively recently the member for Brant-Haldimand, Mr Nixon, was a force within our caucus, and Mr Nixon believed in debate. Our caucus did not believe in ringing bells, reading lakes and rivers into the record, doing what the public might believe to be a little bit immature sort of tactics. We didn't do that. We wanted to debate. We still want to debate. The members of the Liberal caucus still want to put the points of view of their constituents before the government. When we lose that opportunity is when you get tactics that governments don't appreciate and that probably demean the place, because in some ways they make the whole place be held in a little less high esteem.

I think that's unfortunate, but I come back to the basic message: It only happens when you allocate the time, when opposition and government members do not have ample opportunity to put their views before the people of Ontario.

That is what the government is intending to do. It brought these changes in under the cover of darkness, brought them in on a federal election day when for the first time in over 120 years Ontario's Legislature was called to sit. It gained the government absolutely nothing in terms of time because the opposition had offered to sit the Friday of that week, which would have given them the same number of days. But they did that because they knew the opposition, and the press especially, were more particularly interested in the federal election than they were in at any event that might be around Queen's Park.

Many of us were in our constituencies during the federal election because we needed to vote, and we did. I was one who was not here. I was proud to vote at 10:30 in the morning in Kagawong, but that meant I could not be here. It's too far away. I could not be here if I voted at that hour at my home in the village of Kagawong on the north shore of beautiful Manitoulin Island. It couldn't be done. But that's when —

**Mr Pouliot:** I live in Manitouwadge.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I have a friend who lives in Manitouwadge. It would be even more difficult for someone from Manitouwadge to be here on time.

Anyway, that's what the government did. It's just so typical of these people. Everything is done sneakily, if I

can say that, under the table. They try to bring things in here, hope nobody will notice, try to get them through before somebody figures out that this is the plan. When you treat Parliament that way, you get parliaments that do silly things.

I would agree that sitting here during the Bill 103 debate, during the megacity debate, it really was kind of silly to be reading all the street names in Toronto in virtually the identical motion. I know, Mr Speaker, you would agree that was something that was rather silly. But it worked. It did what we wanted it to do over here in opposition. Because we were under time allocation and hadn't been able to amply discuss the bill, we had the opportunity through this extraordinary means under the rules to allow public opinion a place to focus, and the government at least got part of the message.

Shortly after that we had the extraordinary announcement by the Minister of Municipal Affairs: "Oops, our famous downloading plan is off. You know what? What people in the opposition and people out in the community have been saying to us all along is this dumping of social services totally on municipalities — that's off, we're not going to do that any more."

Do you think that would have happened if people hadn't raised their voices and said, "You know, Mike Harris, this is nuts"? I don't think it would have. I think if people hadn't said, "Mike Harris, this is a crazy thing to do," and had the opportunity to understand what he was proposing, he still would have done it. They wandered all through this talking about taking the education tax off property taxpayers. That was widely popular. Everybody wants the education tax taken off residential property taxes. It's a great plan. Mr Snobelen was fabulous talking about that. He sold Bill 104 on the basis of, "I'm taking all this property tax off the residential homeowner." You know what? Leach put it back on. Amazing.

The people are now going to pay that residential property tax, only you're not supposed to notice because now it's collected by the municipality and they just get this bill from the province. The province decides — I'm sorry, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Pouliot:** With respect, Mr Speaker, one more time, time and time again, they fail to secure the 20 necessary members. Would you please check for a quorum?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Would you please check for a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Mr Speaker, as you know, I was speaking to the motion on the rules and I was speaking to the point —

**Mrs Boyd:** To the amendment.

**Mr Michael Brown:** The amendment to the basic motion on the rules. What I was trying to convey is the frustration of opposition members when they don't have ample opportunity to debate. This change in the rules does not permit the members of this assembly the



opportunity to speak when they need to speak on behalf of the people they represent.

I was saying before I was interrupted by the government's inattention that we all come here representing the people in our constituencies. It's a difficult role. We can't always do exactly what each and every one of them wants to do. But I believe we all come here, regardless of where we come from, with an honest dedication to speak on their behalf.

1910

When we come, we expect the opportunity to speak, to be able to speak. Whether you're a Liberal, a New Democrat, a Conservative, a Rhinoceros, an independent, it doesn't matter: We're sent here to speak on behalf of our constituents. We do it in a number of ways. This is one avenue. We work at our committee work where we speak on behalf, we lobby the ministries, we write letters, we talk to people. There are lots of different avenues for us to speak. But by far the one I believe to be the most effective is this one. To be able to stand in front of this chair is a tremendous privilege that we all have. It's a privilege that has been fought over in the British system of government for hundreds and hundreds of years. Speakers have died, people have given up their lives, for the opportunity to stand and speak in these kinds of places, whether it's this particular Parliament or another one.

What this government is intending to do is bad for democracy, it is bad for the people of Ontario, because it is greatly decreasing the amount of time that your member, regardless of which constituency you come from, can represent your views to the Parliament of Ontario.

I heard a member in the Conservative Party criticizing the quality of our debate. That's fair enough. Some of what gets said around this place is not of high quality, but it is not for me to judge; it is for the people I represent to judge. We have a right to come to speak our minds; we have a right to come to speak for our constituents. That holds for every member in this Legislature. Frankly, this is all about making sure there isn't very much time to speak. That is wrong; it is bad.

You're called the Speaker. Why are you called the Speaker? It's because we speak through you. I guess all speakers are going to be even shorter after this; I don't know. It just seems to me that as a member, I'm not going to be able to do my job quite as well the day after these rules pass as I was before.

I would implore the government, if it wants to change the rules, to come to a consensus with the opposition parties. I would say to them, get rid of some of the nonsense in the rules. Some of the bell-ringing and some of the goofy stuff that happens around here only happens because you restrict debate. Do whatever you want in terms of getting rid of the silly kinds of delay tactics that happen around here, but the tradeoff for that is giving us the ability to debate — not putting time limits on our speeches, allowing members to speak when they need to speak on behalf of their constituents.

That is what you should be considering, and I think if you go back to that kind of system instead of using time allocation motions, closure motions that cut off debate,

you won't have these kinds of problems, you won't have the opposition looking for innovative ways to get around the rules. As I said before, I don't want to stand here and read the lakes and rivers into the record. I think that's a waste of the public's time. It shouldn't happen, but frankly, if one party believes the people of Ontario will back them, that party will read the lakes and rivers into the record of the province of Ontario. I know, because Mr Harris did it. They will do these kinds of things. Frankly, it is only out of frustration with not having rules that permit a wide debate among members.

The government House leader would be a wise man if he stood in his place and just withdrew this motion, went back, talked to the two House leaders of the opposition and said: "Let's get together. Let's find a way that will make this place work a little bit better. Let's make some rules that make democracy work for all." I think we could find an accommodation. But if he goes forward with these rules in this place at this time, it is virtually a declaration of war on the people of Ontario and the opposition, which represents at least 55% of those, according to the 1995 election.

Rather than declaring war on 55% of the people's representatives, you would be wise to go back and find a consensus among the House leaders, who are both reasonable people, to find a way that we can expand the amount of time to debate and lessen the ability to do, or to have to do, the silly things we sometimes have to do around here.

**Mr Pouliot:** This is a sense of déjà vu. We mobilize the time of the House, the members sitting here, the general public, the services, from Hansard to the table, simply because of the most draconian choice that the government has chosen to adopt.

On June 8, 1995, Ontario gave a mandate to the government we have today. It was indeed a new order. Attached to their Common Sense Revolution — I trust, Mr Speaker, that you too, with respect, ran your campaign with the mantra on the one hand, with the document, with the manifesto that was written by Harrisites, by Harris and the followers. In it was their agenda for power. They had a litany, a lament, 40 or 50 pages of what they were to do. They were to change the way of business, the face of Ontario, forever, so they thought.

The Common Sense Revolution, that document, was superimposed with a timetable. They had to get it done quick, quick, quick, tout de suite. In order to do this, they had to gag, muzzle, silence the opposition, because you see, by exercising their democratic right the opposition slows things down. The opposition gets in the way. It's the old trick. There is so much, they wish to go so quickly, at blinding speed, and you're to do that in the first two or two and a half years and then the tricks of their trade, of their vulgar profession, are to make you forget in the last two years of their mandate that they had been so evil, that their ill-fated legislation was hurting many, many Ontarians; in fact, hurting more people than it was helping. So the government said, "Look, people will need time to forget."

Let me give you an example. Only yesterday we were debating Bill 129, a post-budget bill.

Yes, Mr Speaker?



1920

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** If I could just ask to stop the clock, if I could have the indulgence of the members, I think it would be appropriate, and I thank the member for Lake Nipigon for allowing me this opportunity, to rule on the points of order that were outlined earlier by many members.

I want to thank all the members who made submissions on the issue of the report of the Integrity Commissioner concerning the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I listened to and carefully considered all of your comments. This matter comes before us because a request was made by the member for York South for the Integrity Commissioner's opinion on a letter written by the minister to the Health Services Restructuring Commission concerning a hospital in his riding. Further details on that issue are in the Integrity Commissioner's report and stand on their own. The commissioner's report, however, now resides with us.

The Members' Integrity Act provides that a commissioner's report of this nature shall be considered and responded to by the assembly within 30 days. Members have made submissions which have expressed varying opinions of what the word "day" in the Members' Integrity Act means. Firstly, the term "sessional day" has a specific meaning in our standing orders, but not necessarily the same meaning in statutes and the Members' Integrity Act.

To clarify the issue of what a "day" means in the context before us, I have consulted with the Integrity Commissioner, the Honourable Gregory Evans. Judge Evans is of the very firm and unequivocal view that the term "day" in the Members' Integrity Act means a calendar day. I concur with Judge Evans. In my view, the act's meaning is plain and is not reasonably subject to any other interpretation.

It is my opinion that section 34 of the Members' Integrity Act places an obligation at our feet. However, when this obligation is addressed and resolved is not within the purview of the Speaker.

Except in an instance of a *prima facie* case of privilege, there exists no authority within our standing orders for the Speaker to order or determine the business of the House. Such authority and discretion resides directly with the government House leader, conferred by standing order 54 and by practice and custom.

The argument that this report has already been considered during ministerial statements and responses today is without foundation. That process did not consider the substantive issues contained within the report. Having been apprised of this situation today, I am confident that the government House leader will take note and act accordingly.

I'm sorry to interrupt the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to indicate through you to the government House leader that we would be delighted to comply with any request he would have to debate this tomorrow in the House. He has my assurance of that.

**The Speaker:** That's not a point of order. That's probably negotiation. We will continue.

## STANDING ORDERS REFORM

## RÉFORME DU RÈGLEMENT

(Continued)

**Mr Pouliot:** I thank you, Mr Speaker. In view of the extraordinary events that took place this afternoon, including Minister Breach — I mean Minister Leach — and two of his associates, colleagues, and the repeated relentless requests from both the official opposition and members of the third party that this affair be addressed, I would be only too willing to extend the courtesy of the time remaining, 25 minutes on the clock, so that we can debate this urgent matter.

You will understand then that there is a human dimension attached to it. We have, as I speak, in the political context, a member of the executive council who is probably bleeding to death. We've heard rumours from people in the corridor that again as I speak the Julius Caesar syndrome was very much alive and well and that the vultures were gathering and the circles were getting lower and more focused. In fact, it's been expressed by some members of cabinet just outside before I came here that the true opposition at this time, and this is a sad day indeed, does not lie with the Liberals nor the NDP but with the people around them. So it is not a pretty sight. There are rumours of a carnage that people will expedite, and they are descending on the carcass of one minister who has fallen from grace.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Order. I was just wanting to understand that you're bringing this within the amendment to the motion that's before us.

**Mr Pouliot:** I will indeed, but we cannot wait for too, too long, for ministers in disgrace are a bit like fish: After three days they begin to smell a little, to ferment, and their future is indeed behind them.

Rule changes: Again at the risk of sounding repetitious, the pundits, the columnists, the political experts, these people who follow the political scene not only in Ontario, not only in Canada, but worldwide, people who make it their affair to compare, to monitor one system vis-à-vis another, when presented with what is being attempted — actually with what is being done here — are beyond appalled and shocked in their reaction. They remind us, rightly so, that this is unprecedented in the legislative assemblies of Canada, that the government has its role, ample opportunity to expedite passage of its will, of its program, and no one will begrudge, no one will say it shouldn't be that way.

Governments in a majority position, when all is said and done, when all the debates have taken place, inevitably, and that's great, shall have their way. If it's legislation that does not find favour with the public — and not all bills that become law do, because you have to make some unpopular decisions from time to time — you do so at your own peril. But what is being done here is transparent. It pushes beyond any previous threshold the government agenda, for they have few bills that work in isolation. Their program is meshed, the legislation is webbed, so they must advance on many, many fronts, and if they do it quickly, if they shoot to kill at the beginning, they believe the people of Ontario have a very short memory. They'll do their dirty tricks, and then we're supposed to forget because we're not there to voice the



dissatisfaction in the last two years, and then like lemmings go back to the polls when the writs have been issued and mark our little X like very docile, lamblike citizens and say we will return that coalition, the present government, for a second term, that of the alliance of the Reform Conservatives.

It's not going to happen this way because yesterday we were debating Bill 129. How can you forget that if you make \$23,000 a year, a family of four, under the tax break you shall receive \$450 per year? Whoopee-do. Big time. Let's paint the town blue. But if you make \$257,000 per year, more than a quarter of a million dollars, you shall receive, for it is written by the lot there, the government of the day, the princely sum of \$15,000, 30 times more than people on small salaries who are trying to round off the month.

If you make \$1 million, and some people do — alas, not too many — then you've hit the jackpot. You've arrived. Today is your day under the sun, for when you file with Revenue Canada, that group of well-organized people, you're looking at \$100,000.

The irony of what the Mike Harris government is proposing is that if you make \$1 million and you get their tax break, the tax break alone per year is more than four times the salary of people making \$23,000, more than four times their salary.

1930

**Mrs Johns:** Explain the \$100-billion, the billions of dollars a year that you put my kids into debt.

**Mr Pouliot:** When you mention that, it provokes the worst in people, and they do it by grabbing a club, but it's the reality. I'm not the one saying this. If only I were the one saying this and could change it — I would never have introduced it and therefore would not have to change it. But it's push, push, push. The agenda is at the station. There is only one train leaving the station. The length of track is their term of office. It must leave on time, and I must give them that. They've modelled their method of delivering, having the trains run on time, and they're quite proud of that. They superimpose, you see. They have an itinerary. They must get there; the brigade must be at the next station to deliver.

It's going to take about four years to change the face of Ontario, but from the time you pass your legislation until implementation, if it's in the last term of office, you begin to wear it.

For instance, remember the bill to close hospitals. They went into that Pandora's box, into that bag of snakes, and they came out with a bill to close hospitals. They said, "We can't close hospitals and debate back and forth, because people will take notice." So they established a commission, another brigade if you wish, a platoon that had the power to do all the necessary raiding, to padlock. At the headquarters, you don't have to deal any more; the commission does — the commission did. But if you debate, it takes a little time to close hospitals, and if you close hospitals six months before the election, as you know, Mr Speaker, people will start shouting. People will interrupt every proceeding if you do that, and a referee, an arbiter like you, will be asked to bring them back to order.

The opposition is saying, "Look, let's talk about this." There are people who want to cut all the trees, and some

people do not wish to cut any trees, but in there you can recycle, you can harvest what is mature and you can ensure prosperity. But before you do this, you must study your plans. You don't wish to make too many mistakes. That's the way you do it. Then you see the collective effort. You will have your way, for you have the majority. You have underestimated, with respect, the capacity of people to deal with change. People will readily admit that subconsciously, even consciously, they go through change every day. They are not opposed to change, but to be able to digest, to assimilate the changes, they have to be well thought out.

I recall again very vividly some of us sat on the committee where you came up with — if it's your philosophy, I respect you and I respect your opinion — the megacity. I may disagree, and that's okay. But halfway through, it's not the same any more, and then again it's not all that or it's not all this.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It seems obvious there is no quorum in this place.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you please check for a quorum.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** I too, like my colleagues with the respective parties of the opposition, am quite disappointed, and you will perhaps allow me a *mise au point*. No less than perhaps a dozen times in the past couple of days we constantly have had to call for quorums. I find it quite difficult in a House which has 130 members, 82 of those 130 —

**The Acting Speaker:** We're now discussing the amendment to the motion. I just want you to bring your comments within that, please.

**Mr Pouliot:** Thank you very kindly, Mr Speaker. I understand, with respect, that you're very busy, so when we're talking about standing orders being amended in a severe fashion, the number of seats being reduced from 130 to 103, a logical question would be about what is a House that's duly constituted. It brings us — you're quite right — directly to the requirement of people present in the House, which is that of a quorum. The rules come very close, and I believe the analogy has some validity; the parallel is valid. How can you look at these changes that are being proposed by the government without first at the forefront asking yourselves what constitutes the House? It goes hand in hand. This is why I spend a minute or two to talk about the very important composition of the House, the necessities, the requirements, the quorum, that so many members present will constitute the assembly.

I know you were concerned because I saw you, and you shot up, if I may. You got up quickly and you said to talk about the quorum in the context of what is being debated here. I thank you, Mr Speaker, because I know — I have followed your career — that you too are concerned. I also know that you, in your position, cannot

say too much, for you have to be impartial. I see you shaking your head, sir, and I know that you would like to say what is being done here is wrong. I know you're an educated and intelligent person and I admire you, but you cannot, in your present position, chastise the government for what they're about to do.

1940

Systematic it is; deliberate it is. It's taught. Oh, not by the back bench. These backbenchers want to go fast. They're in a hurry. The career is condensed. They have ambition, coupled with some vanity, a touch, a spice of egocentricity, and it will propel some politicians for a long time. But just in case they don't come back, just in case they have to pack their tents, just in case they have to apologize for having been here, just in case they are overnights, in case they're not voted for by the electorate because of what they're doing, they have to make sure that they leave a presence, that they leave a legacy, that the train is pushed down the track as far as possible, that they derail everything that has been done before.

Sometimes it's better to do nothing, to wait. Other times, when you have a convention and something is wrong, you must isolate some molecules. You don't have to change everything. But with them it's the only way. Nothing, it seems, that has been done before in our vast and magnificent province is working, for they're changing almost everything.

The United Nations has decreed for the fourth straight year that the best country in the world to live in is ours, Canada, even with our faults. But the onus is on the positive; it gets better. But right now it's no better than in Canada, and Ontario is the engine. They tell us that child poverty is not our best record, that we should do something about child poverty. They also tell us about youth unemployment, which is tragically high.

Are these the kind of rule changes to expedite because we need to help the children who have less? Is this why we're pushing the rule changes, to help the children who have less, give them a helping hand, give them a chance? Are we introducing — this is the government speaking — the rule changes to put young people back to work between the ages of 16 and 24? Twenty per cent are not working, are not making a wage, big-time trouble looming. Generation X too wants to buy the big-ticket items. They want a chance to live. You won't find any opposition when you have those measures. People wouldn't dare.

You're changing the rules because you feel that it's not going fast enough. We offer to sit, to prolong hours. Then they say: "You're filibustering. We will decide when you're being childish. We will decide when you're being unreasonable." Never mind that when they were the third party, they spent a full three days reading every creek and river and lake in the province of Ontario in alphabetical order. They were wasting time, but then they were on the other side and now it's we who are wasting time.

The fact is that the system works; the system works because it has checkmarks. It's amazing. It seems that every government wishes at one time to facilitate their agenda, their program, to change the rules. You've got to watch for balance, and it also seems that the opposition,

with its determination, always finds ways to express its role — at times to oppose, at times to suggest, at times to amend, all times to represent. Amazing. They always find a way.

They're saying: "You're being mischievous, you're being biased. You want us to go back and sit there and you want to take our place and govern the province." If it were only that, you are fortunate and you wait a while, wait your turn and the number will come up. We find the measures draconian because we've checked around. We've asked people — Floyd Laughren, again and again, from Nickel Belt, is appalled, hurt. He is searching long and hard and saying: "Why would they do this? What's the difference?"

Now they can pass a bill in four days. This is very good, that you pass a bill in four days. Our House leader mentioned, in different words perhaps, earlier on, some days you can pass many bills and it takes so little time — it's not a threat; you're the boss people, you have the majority — and deservingly so. But I wish I didn't have to choose that kind of terminology where you have the boss and you do as you're told. This is a democracy; this is unlike another forum for discussion. Maybe it should be a little more, some will say a little less, but the system works with the present checkmarks.

If you wish to have full debate — not by way of threats or ultimatums; it doesn't fit my style — do what you have to do. How do you want to proceed? There are some choices. We can be most imaginative, most innovative, heaven knows. We have people who excel at that kind of methodology, and they entice the help of many, many friends. Let it not come to that. The opposition will never see itself under a state of siege. The dynamics do not allow; you're not conditioned that way when you have 15 and 30 members. Credibility is important to us; accountability as well. But it has often been said that the process is made to allow the opposition to express the voices of the opposition. When you attempt to take that away, you shortchange yourself. You're doing it to yourself. You're hurting and eating your young.

Let's give our head a shake and smell the coffee here. It's not going to go any faster, and people will be quite upset. You say, "You're upset as it is. We really don't give a darn," if I may be so bold. "Whether you like it or not, just get off the track. I'm coming down the track." Well, well, well, Mr Harris, my man, if you want to play it this way, we will take whatever book, whatever sheet the rules are written on and we will flag it all over to make sure the people we represent have their say. It is not mathematics, it is not nuclear physics, it is not Greek mythology; it's called democracy, give and take, a fair shake, a chance, a voice, not a gag order, not the strait-jacket, not the handcuffs, not the shackles, not the chains.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Pouliot:** A friend of mine asks me, "How many goosesteps are there to Manitouwadge?" because I live up north. This is not the kind of language. If you ask me how many kilometres or how many miles, maybe I can help, but how many goosesteps to Manitouwadge is not the kind of terminology I will accept, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Len Wood:** It's not very parliamentary.



**Mr Pouliot:** It's not very parliamentary. If it's in keeping with the kind of verbiage we hear — I go back, as I conclude, to the idea that the agenda is to make the trains run on time. What we're saying is that what is being done here is wrong. There has not been any consultation. We're getting the rules shoved down our throats and the province suffers as a consequence of it.

I know that when it will be time to vote many of the foot soldiers and spear carriers on the other side, those ambitious Young Turks would like to vote with the opposition. They're bothered by it; their conscience bothers them. But those ideologues have read and repeated the manifesto so often that I have no illusion that they will side with equilibrium and a balance. I have absolutely no illusion. That's why I've chosen while speaking to them to address the good many people in Ontario who still believe in a democratic system. I want to thank you, Speaker.

1950

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Before the interjections start from across the floor, I would point out that I have sat in this chamber without one single interjection with respect to my colleagues the member for Algoma-Manitoulin or the member for Lake Nipigon. I'm looking forward to the same respect in exchange. I think, Mr Speaker, that you will observe that interjections are out of order so that we can have an opportunity to speak in this House, and that's really what all this debate has been about. We're debating the motion to change the standing orders of the House.

The interesting aspect of this debate is that we're here, on both sides of the chamber, and I respect this, passionately expressing our views and, on both sides of the chamber, expressing passionately our concerns: one, the opposition, their concerns about the changes and, on the government's side, our concern about the necessity for the changes. What is it that has brought us to this point?

I actually was encouraged to hear a little time ago, about 45 minutes ago, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin say that he agrees that sitting here reading street names was rather silly. I respect that member for making that statement, for making that admission because frankly sitting here for 10 days non-stop, 24 hours a day, reading 15,000 amendments that were identical in wording, except for the change of the street name —

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It would be in order if we had a quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check whether a quorum is present.

**Clerk Assistant:** Mr Speaker, a quorum is not present.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** Mr Speaker, a quorum is now present.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Mississauga South.

**Mrs Marland:** What I was saying was that the member for Algoma-Manitoulin had admitted that he thought it was rather silly to sit here and read street names. In fairness to that member, not to take that sentence out of context, he led into that comment by referring to the fact that the member for Nipissing, in

opposition, had read names of lakes and rivers and streams at one point when the opposition parties were trying to make a point against the then government.

But what he didn't say was that when the member for Nipissing did that, he did it for one day; not for 10 days, 24 hours a day. He did it for one day from whatever time he started; I think it was about three and a quarter hours or two and three quarter hours. In any case, if we're going to debate something in this House and we're going to use examples, we have to make sure that the examples are out of the same fruit basket. We can't debate oranges and apples.

I think that the government has a far greater expectation of us as elected representatives of the people of Ontario in this place to do something far better than what we witnessed in the 10-day filibuster earlier this spring. Even in the physical sense, this place, this honoured chamber, this seat of Parliament for the greatest province in Canada, became a pigsty. Because we sat 24 hours a day, we couldn't get litter picked up, we couldn't get the carpets cleaned. We literally lived in this place.

I don't think the public wishes to have their elected members sitting 24 hours a day for 10 days around the clock and not be able to look after their needs and their concerns and service them as constituents in their ridings, even for members who normally are down here and away from their ridings during the week. They can still look after their constituent by telephone and they go home on the weekends.

During that filibuster, the business of this province ground to a standstill. I for one who has sat as a member in this chamber for 12 years was totally embarrassed by the situation we were in. I found the situation in this place deplorable for all of us. Frankly, I know there were members in both the official opposition and in the third party who agreed with me, long-standing members who are here for one reason, to serve their constituents. To have what went on during that filibuster was something that I hope and pray I never live to see again in this place, and I plan to serve in this place for at least another 10 years.

2000

**Mr Len Wood:** You've got to be dreaming, Margaret. You're going to get defeated in the next election.

**Mrs Marland:** I think interjections are out of order.

**Mr Len Wood:** Well, you're not going to be here for 10 years.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs Marland:** This member did this all last night, Mr Speaker, and I ask you to call him to order.

When we look at the reason we're here, when we look at the privilege it is to be here — I don't think any one of us will deny it is an honour and a privilege to represent the people in our constituencies — when we look at what this chamber, this place, this House of Parliament stands for in this, as I said, the greatest province in Canada, the greatest country in the world, do we really want to be a part of some of the things we have witnessed in the past two years?

There were times, longer than two years ago, where there was bell-ringing. So what happened? We changed the standing orders so that the bell-ringing couldn't



continue for days. And guess what? When we changed the standing orders to stop the bell-ringing — and for those members who are new in this chamber, our staff, who were here eight, 10, 12 hours a day, had to work with the bells continually ringing. It got to a point where we agreed to turn the bells off but they were deemed to be ringing. How stupid could that be? But that's what we had to do. So we changed the standing orders, and when we changed those standing orders, even though we were in opposition, we agreed and voted in favour of those changes, even though we knew we were eliminating, supposedly, to use the opposition's words, a tool to fight for democracy.

Incidentally, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin spoke of Bob Nixon and referred to him as being here until recently. As a matter of fact, it was in 1990 or early 1991 that Bob Nixon left. The election was in September 1990 and I think he left before Christmas; I'm not sure. In any case, it's not recently that he's been here. It's actually six or seven years since Bob Nixon was here.

The reason I know that is that I personally have missed the calibre of representation that Bob Nixon, in an opposition party — and for most of my time in opposition, he was in the government. He was a member of the government for five years, a statesman, I might add, for this province, not of my political persuasion but someone for whom I had the greatest of respect. If anybody in this chamber, when he stood up to speak, demonstrated compassion, commitment, ability and, above all else, dignity, it was Bob Nixon. Bob Nixon would come in this chamber without a single note and could speak eloquently about anything and answer questions with tremendous ability as a member of Premier David Peterson's cabinet.

I'm quite sure that Bob Nixon, whom I considered a friend when he was here, a colleague in this chamber, would have been absolutely horrified to have been here and sat through what we sat through in the fall of 1995 when the member for Scarborough North did his little thing. I'm quite sure that with a statesman like Bob Nixon in the House, the Liberal caucus would not have been reduced to the kind of thing we were reduced to with that particular demonstration.

I don't deny that the official opposition was upset about something the government was doing. That's par for the course. That's totally understandable. That's the role of opposition. I should know; I sat there for 10 years. I concede that is their role, but it is not their role to disobey the standing orders in this place, and the standing orders in this place require that when a member is named by the Speaker, that member leaves the chamber. In this case, that late afternoon the member for Scarborough North was named by the Speaker. He did not leave, and worse than that, he was encouraged by the rest of his Liberal caucus not to leave.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: This is a member, the member for Mississauga South, who consistently tries to stand in her place and express disapproval when people are not speaking to the motion at hand. We are speaking about amendments that have nothing to do with that particular change in the standing rules.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order. I was listening very carefully and I'm waiting for that to develop, member.

**Mrs Marland:** The motion that is on the floor has to do with the change in standing orders, and I respectfully suggest that my argument is in support of the need for the change in those standing orders.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The item of business that is now being discussed is an amendment to the motion. It concerns two particular sections of the motion, which do not include the section the member is discussing.

**Mrs Marland:** I have the motion in front of me and I am speaking to the amendment. The amendment is talking about deletion of two sections in the government motion to change the standing orders. The government motion —

**Mrs Boyd:** They have absolutely nothing to do with the Curling episode.

**Mrs Marland:** It's very interesting to listen to the member for London Centre with her interjections. Had she been here listening both to her own colleagues and to the official opposition speakers, I would say to her that they did not confine their comments totally or only to those narrow sections. I guess because I'm saying something that the former member of the Bob Rae government doesn't like, I'm going to be interrupted, the same way I was last night. That's fine. It's very interesting that this happens, but I will continue.

I still will tell you that the necessity for changing the standing orders, the necessity for the motion that is on the floor — the motion on the floor is to make a deletion to the government motion to change the standing orders; therefore, my debate on why we need to change the standing orders, I would respectfully suggest, is in order.

When we look at what has happened in this place the last two years and we see the kind of behaviour we have had, that we have never had before in the history of this place: someone who refuses to leave the chamber when they're named, which is in the current standing orders, someone who stays in the chamber and does goodness knows what under a blanket because that individual is not able to leave the chamber to go to the washroom — I find that totally disgusting, totally, totally disgusting.

Furthermore, I believe it's totally unacceptable to the people of this province. I believe the people of this province elect us to come here and do the work and the business of government, not to get bogged down with the kind of thing we have had in the last two years.

2010

The member for Welland-Thorold used the kind of language in this place — it is recorded in Hansard; I think it was a week ago last Thursday — that I hope and pray we are never subjected to again. I don't believe any member in the opposition is proud of the language that was used by that member on the record in his place, and who then stood in the centre of the floor here and repeated more of this filth that came out of his mouth as he was attacking the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. That kind of behaviour all of us wish to disassociate ourselves from, and frankly, that's what we will disassociate ourselves from.



The subject has been how long people can speak. It's very interesting when you talk about how long people speak. That same member, the member for Welland-Thorold, spoke in this House for 17½ hours on government automobile insurance. He was in favour of government automobile insurance, ironically, because when his party became the government, his own government was not in favour — not that we were sorry to not see that happen.

But where is it ever written that how long somebody speaks guarantees the quality of that speech? Where is it ever written that if you talk for an hour and a half, you're going to have something better to say than you can say in 30 or 40 minutes?

The argument by the opposition has been that we are limiting the opportunity for all members to represent their constituents and speak in this place. In fact, it's the opposite. The very fact that we are going to go from an hour and a half for a leadoff speaker to 40 minutes, and from 30 minutes to 20 minutes for subsequent speakers, means that more people get to speak. But I don't expect the opposition to understand that. It's very straightforward. There will be more speakers, because we will have 20-minute limitations on subsequent speakers.

**Mr Pouliot:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am intrigued by the remarks from my distinguished colleague. Would you check that she is entitled to a quorum?

**The Acting Speaker:** I don't have to check for that. I know absolutely that she is. If you'd like, I'll check that there is a quorum here.

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Mississauga South.

**Mrs Marland:** The fact that we are changing the time that members may speak from half an hour to 20 minutes will mean that in a given day more members will have the opportunity to speak. If the opposition doesn't understand that, there isn't anything I can do to help them.

The fact that this change in the standing orders will now give the leadoff speaker 40 minutes instead of an hour and a half I think will mean that the level of debate will improve, because people will know that they can't stand in their place and read for an hour and a half from their unlimited choice of Hansard, excerpts from books, newsletters. This will guarantee that the quality of debate will improve, and I would think that would be something we would all want.

When I look at the Speakers I've had the privilege to serve with since I arrived in this place — and I think of Speaker Turner, Speaker Edighoffer, Speaker Warner, Speaker McLean and the current Speaker Stockwell — I am reminded of the fact that in that 12 years the deterioration in what takes place in this chamber in terms of behaviour is going downhill compared to what it was 12, 10, eight, six years ago.

This afternoon, when the gallery was full of young students, we had the members opposite lifting these 100-year-old desk lids and banging them with such force that

in fact the member for London Centre sent her glass of water flying. These desks are in this chamber as a privilege for us to use. They are not here to bang this lid up and down in the way they did.

I treasure these desks, and I want to tell you why: This desk to me represents over a century of service in this place. In 1993 we celebrated the centenary of this building. These desks, with their inkwells, their brass locks and every other aspect of these desks, mean to me that far better people than we have had the privilege of standing in this place and serving their electorate, people for whom the standing orders have always been important, people for whom the respect of this chamber and what it represents has always been important to them — not for members to sit in their place, yell and scream and bang these 100-year-old desks as though they were plywood.

That is symbolic to me. It's symbolic that so little respect can be shown for this place as to abuse this furniture, as we saw this afternoon, and such a level of noise that the Speaker had to recess the House because it was in grave disorder. That was all witnessed by the young people, the future of our province, sitting in our public galleries.

I am happy that we're going to change the standing orders. I am happy because I am hopeful that by so doing we may regain the kind of decorum that this chamber, this seat of Parliament for the province of Ontario, should have.

I think the member for Algoma was the person who earlier referred to the tremendous sacrifice that people have made to serve in this place. I would suggest there's been a far greater sacrifice than the people who serve in this place. The greater sacrifice are those thousands of people who have given their lives in any number of wars. You can talk about the great world wars, you can talk about the Korean War — in our case, not anything more recent than that.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Marland:** Those people who gave their lives — for whom obviously the people who are now interjecting do not have any respect — gave their lives so that we can live in a democracy, that we have the freedom in this great country and indeed in this great province to elect people to represent us and serve them. We are the privileged few who have been elected to do that. We are not elected to tie up this chamber reading 15,000 amendments for 10 days, 24 hours a day, while this place totally disintegrates because of the physical condition of the chamber.

Who really wants to turn their television on in the morning at breakfast time and see photographs of people asleep? I remember the leader of the third party asleep in his sleeping bag with his pillows draped over the chair. Who really wants to see those photographs, photographs of members on both sides of this chamber asleep at 2 and 3 and 4 in the morning? No wonder those people were asleep, working non-stop around the clock as they were.

But that's not what this place is about. That is not why people made the supreme sacrifice in order that we live in a democracy where we can vote to elect people to represent us, to run the business of this province. That's



not what this place is about and I'm proud to say that is not what this government is about.

2020

This government is doing what no other government, including previous governments of our own party, has had the courage to do. I am proud that our government is saying, "If you can speak for 20 minutes on second reading and 20 minutes on third reading on any bill, if you need any more time than that to represent your constituents, then we're really in big trouble." If you look at the great statesmen of this world, and we can name any of those — actually, it would be helpful if the member for Renfrew North were in the chamber; he is such a brilliant historian that he could probably name very quickly a dozen of the world's greatest statesmen — believe me, it doesn't take them more than 20 minutes to represent their point and their opinion and the direction for their countries and their provinces and their states.

It's almost a little humorous that the arguments are that these people will not be able to represent their constituents by the change in the standing orders when in fact it's the absolute opposite. More members will have that opportunity. The bottom line, of course, of all this is how indefensible it is really to argue against these standing orders, which are the standing orders of the federal House of Commons. I don't happen to think that I have less ability than my colleagues in the federal House and I think the federal House can run as it has, not through New Democratic Party governments but certainly through Liberal and Conservative governments. Those governments have run quite happily, quite efficiently and quite successfully, depending on your viewpoint of which political party, with their standing orders, and we in this House are simply adopting the standing orders of the federal House.

I look forward to our getting on with it. I recognize the job and the need etc that the opposition parties feel they have to oppose this government motion. I'm certainly glad that we will pass this motion and then, thankfully, we will get on with the job we were elected to do, which is to serve the people of this wonderful province.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm glad the member for Mississauga South spoke for her full 30 minutes, because I don't think she could have captured everything she wanted to within her speech in less than 30 minutes. I frankly wish she had more time, because I enjoy listening to her. I don't always agree with her, but she and I have been friends over the years and I've enjoyed the contribution she has made to the House. I find it most unfortunate that under the rules of the House, as proposed, at least, she would have had to confine her remarks to either 20 minutes or 10 minutes, depending on what point in time we were at in the debate. I think she has made a case very well this evening for retaining that 30 minutes, and I will try to remember that when we are engaged in some discussions.

I am pleased to see the amendments that have come forward. First of all I want to say I fully understand that the government wants to avoid a couple of circumstances that arose that stopped the government in its tracks. That's understandable and I expected it, and I'm not condemning the government for it at all. I think some of the changes the government House leader has proposed

are changes which probably, on reflection, most members of the House would accept. There are some that I think are going to be detrimental to the operation of this House and detrimental to democracy, and there will be a difference of opinion on those, but I genuinely believe they are important and that if they were withdrawn and the main components the government is really concerned about were retained, you could solve this problem.

There were two basic problems I think the government encountered in terms of being stopped in its tracks. In both instances it was good that the government had a chance to stop and reflect for a while and perhaps reconsider its position. Certainly on Bill 26 and Bill 103 that was the case, where the government reflected very carefully on its position. Both those bills passed, but there were some amendments made to them, some significant amendments made to Bill 26.

I think the House works best when the three House leaders are able to get together and decide upon and agree upon a schedule for legislation to proceed. For instance, there are bills where there is a consensus, where they proceed quickly, where in fact all the speeches are supportive and you see those bills move quickly through the House, and that's good. I think of the victims' rights bill as one example and the truck safety bill as being another example of how we can move rather rapidly. There were other bills as well; the Waterloo region bill was another example.

There are other bills that, because they don't have great consequences but may still be opposed by the opposition, will take less time than we might normally expect. The Minister of Natural Resources is here. There's a bill on the docket now — we were quite willing, by the way, to pass it by the end of this session — a bill that I think has a consensus in this House. There would be some concerns about the resources to fulfil it and perhaps some speeches on that, but the intent of the bill is one which all three parties agree with, so I wouldn't anticipate that kind of bill is going to take a long time. That's why I say it works best when the three House leaders are able to sit down and have respect for one another. I can assure you I have the greatest respect for my friend Dave Johnson, the member from East York and government House leader, and Bud Wildman, and I had for Ernie Eves when I worked with Ernie when he was House leader, both of the Conservative Party and as government House leader.

I think that's how the House works best. It's less cantankerous, and I know there are dustups from time to time in here, but I can assure you that the overwhelming majority of members of this House really don't like those highly charged, highly confrontational days in the House. They're very stressful for everyone, they are often ugly for others to observe because of the nastiness that develops in the debate and outside of the debate, and I don't think the House is well served by that.

If the government came in and said, "Look, we want to avoid a circumstance where a member can abstain and refuse to leave the House and stop the House in its tracks; we don't want that to happen again, so we're going to make some changes in the procedural rules to stop that," even though that may come from the opposition



point of view, and maybe from the point of view of a considerable number of the public, have improved a bill considerably and improved a process, I'd understand that. I can tell you I don't even oppose that, even though it takes away a major arguing point for those of us in the opposition. Or the filibuster: I understand the frustration of the government with some 12,000 or 14,000 amendments coming in on one bill. If the government wanted to bring in a measure which would permit the Speaker of the House to group those amendments so that we could go through them much more speedily, that's understandable, and again I'm not going to be critical of the government House leader for doing that. They're both reasonable things to do.

There are a couple other measures. I look at the bells, for instance, and I like it that the bells can ring for 30 minutes, but I can also understand the government House leader saying, "That's not 30 minutes of productive time; let's reduce that to 15 minutes, perhaps, for an adjournment bell." I understand those things. I don't think they're unreasonable and I don't consider the government House leader unreasonable when he says that.

There are some key components that I don't think are valuable, however, to the working of this House, and I think essentially the government is using a sledgehammer to kill a mosquito with this problem. They have some problems they want to address, and I'm prepared to see them address those, but while they're doing it, they are making some other changes which I don't think are going to be beneficial in the long run to all members of this House, particularly if the Conservative Party happens for some reason to be in opposition in the future. I'll tell you what happens. Even though people who believe in the democratic system will advocate a more democratic system, changing the rules that you are about to try to impose, it's going to be hard to convince a future cabinet to do so. I know, I've seen these things happen over the years. New governments tend to take the old rules and perhaps even vengefully, and it shouldn't be the case, use them against the party that imposed them. I don't think that's good for democracy, I don't think it's good for the atmosphere in the House, but it's a reality that I'm afraid happens when you don't try to come to some consensus on what should be contained in any rule changes.

2030

Ernie Eves and Norm Sterling, two cabinet ministers now — and I'm not going to go through the process of quoting them — both made good points. Essentially the points were that sometimes the opposition has to slow the government down to allow the government to reconsider its position and to allow the public to gain a better idea of what's going on in the House and a better idea of the components of a bill. If the government wins the argument in the end, so be it. That's democracy; the opposition has to accept that. Sometimes the government is going to win the court of public opinion by saying, "We think the components of this bill are on balance good for the province; the opposition doesn't."

But there are times when the government has to be slowed down and sometimes even brought almost to a halt — very momentarily and in very rare instances. That's essentially what Ernie Eves was saying and that's

what Norm Sterling was saying in his letter as an MPP to the Ottawa Sun in about 1992 when he said, "If I didn't have these" and I'll use the words "bargaining chips to use, if I didn't have ways of slowing the government or deterring the government, then nothing I say would count because I wouldn't be able to influence the outcome of a debate."

That's what is happening here. You are declawing the opposition. That works for efficiency, I want to tell you that; it does. It will move your legislation faster, and without wanting to dwell on this, the unelected people, the Guy Giornos of this world, are going to like that, because they don't sit in this House and they're never going to have to sit in opposition. They're just going to have to sit in the Premier's office and advise. They don't have to worry about that, but some of the other members do, including my friend the member for Mississauga South, who spoke eloquently in this House expressing her concerns, as I think she's entitled to do.

If these go through virtually unchanged or just tinkered with, I can tell you the mood will turn ugly in the House because what invariably happens is the opposition simply will not cooperate in any instance. They won't have an incentive to do so. Today there is an incentive to do so under the present rules. There are times when we will need unanimous consents where the government will say, "No, you can't have them." The penalty won't be just one way, it'll be both ways, but that's what makes things even uglier.

Let me give you an example of what happens: Often-times members, because they're busy, don't get a chance till the last minute to file their private member's business or they'll have to change — someone may be ill, someone may have to go somewhere — and we routinely accommodate those wishes among each other so that can happen. What you'll start to see happen is both sides saying, "No, you can't do that." Does that serve anybody? No. I prefer to see a private member be able to present that business. If it's in a different cycle of time, so be it. I want to be cooperative in those regards. When the government makes a clerical error or a small procedural error, I don't want to have to be over here saying, "No, as a result you're going to lose a bill," or something when indeed that wasn't the purpose of what they did. But that's what's going to happen, that really is what's going to happen and I think members should know that before they make the final decisions on this.

I want to say that less speaking time is not necessarily good. Not everybody can speak for a long period of time or wants to speak for a long period of time, but if you want to accommodate more people, I don't mind those night sessions. The government says we need more time in the House. I don't object to that. What I object to is counting it as an additional day for the purpose of debate. But if it's there to accommodate more members to speak, I'm interested in hearing what other members have to say in this House. Whether I'm in the House or in my office watching the monitor, I listen to what other members have to say. I don't mind that period from 6:30 to 9:30 to be used for that purpose. But you see, the real purpose is not that; the real purpose of that time is so the government can get more legislation through in a shorter period of time and the House doesn't have to sit as long.



The member for Nepean wrote this letter to the Leader of the Opposition where he said, "This House should be sitting more than 25 weeks of the year." I agree. I have no objection to that. If we want to accommodate more debate, let's have the House sit more days and a longer period of time in the day. But what you have to have for all governments is accountability, so you pay the price of another day of debate by having a question period. That's the accountability; you go through that process.

As a former minister I can assure you, and the minister presently in the House will confirm this, it isn't always a comfortable time to be coming into question period knowing there are some great difficulties out there you have to deal with and maybe not even some good answers you have. It's a very stressful time, it's very compelling in terms of the total time you have to deal with your business, but it is an important part of democracy.

I look at where you've placed question period now. Take today, for instance. Not just your government, but a government faced with the circumstances today, an embarrassment, a situation where the Integrity Commissioner has rendered an opinion on what a cabinet minister has done — I don't want to get into the details of it, but on a day like this what happens is that a government will want to delay question period as long as possible.

By placing it seventh on the list instead of third on the list, the government has an opportunity to introduce a number of bills or get involved in some motions or committee reports or additional statements by ministers, all designed to push the question period back further and further, so that media people have a harder time meeting their deadlines and the interest is abated somewhat. That's good for the government in power, whatever government it is, but it's not good for the democratic process.

Under your original rules, for instance, if question period started, say, at 25 minutes after 3, then you would have a 35-minute question period, because a new rule you have is that orders of the day, regardless of anything else, must begin at 4 o'clock. You can see what that does to the accountability of the government. I think the government should change that. They should put question period higher in that list than it is at the present time.

I think the government should accommodate members who want to speak for 30 minutes in this House. The leadoff time can be used in a couple of ways. You could reduce that to, say, 60 minutes from 90 minutes and still split the time. What I think should happen — very often you're seeing it happening now — to accommodate speakers is that instead of one person speaking for 90 minutes, although it may happen in this particular field here, what you see is the parties splitting that time up. I have no objection to the government doing that as well, splitting that time up to set the stage.

Maybe the minister wants to speak, maybe a parliamentary assistant, maybe — my friend from St Catharines-Brock is here. If it were something dealing with the grape and wine industry, for instance, I would want to see him have that opportunity within that leadoff time available to the government to speak as well. I have no objection to that. That's good. There's nothing wrong with it at all. That's why I think the present setup is fine.

You will win this for the government: You will be assured that your bills will move much more quickly, because when you limit the last speeches after five hours to 10 minutes, that's really going to confine it. If Guy Giorno or whoever it is who likes these things is going to be happy with that, I can assure you there's good reason: They will be happy. I don't think it helps the process an awful lot and I hope Mr Johnson, when he talks to Mr Wildman and me over the summer, is able to see fit to modify that somewhat from what it is.

I was concerned at the fact that — I should say this before I say that: The best process is one that allows the members and the news media and the public to be fully informed about all the implications of legislation. The only way you can do that is to stretch it out over a number of days. That's why I don't think that the afternoon and evening sessions are a good idea. Stretch it out; let people know about it. Maybe it's a couple of weeks; maybe you're juggling about four bills at that time. Nothing wrong with that. The public then can get a good idea of what it's about.

They may send the minister letters and say to the Minister of Natural Resources: "We think your Game and Fish Act amendments are great. Proceed with them. Let's go." They'll send letters to the oppositions saying perhaps the same thing or perhaps some criticisms. But at least everybody knows what the problems are and then by the time it gets to committee, the government can resolve some of those problems along with the opposition and ultimately the bill is much better. I think the government governs better when it takes its time to do things right instead of rushing things through. I don't care whether it's Liberal, NDP or Conservative; every government does a better job with that.

There's emergency legislation that comes up. There may be a strike — for instance, a TTC strike — where the city is ground to a halt. That's a case where the government has gone to the Speaker and the Speaker has said, "Sure, bring the House back." The three House leaders get together and say, "This afternoon that's through; that's not a problem." Or when the Education Relations Commission has found jeopardy for students and the government has come to the opposition and said, "We need this bill through this afternoon. They've found jeopardy," and everyone agrees once you've found jeopardy the bill should proceed. That's very reasonable and you see that go through quickly with a minimum of speeches, and that's the way it should be.

I was concerned with the way this was done. As I've said before, at the risk of being a bit repetitious, I think if governments are going to be proud of what they're doing, they should do it up front. They should put it up front. If you're proud of these rule changes and think they're going to be something that's going to be attractive to the public, then put them up front and say, "Here's what we want to do."

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Instead, on the morning of the federal election day there's a press conference held and the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader releases these proposed changes. That's hiding it. Then we got around to the day there was a press gallery party and the opposi-



tion was so reasonable that day that the government House leader dared not actually put them down that day, though the motion was ready. But it came Thursday afternoon; at about five to 5 the motion was dropped on the table. Everybody has filed his or her stories and the members are heading back to their constituencies. So again, it's a chance to hide it.

The third case may be less fair, it may have been coincidental, but there we were on the day — and as I say, near the end of a session it's tough, so can I say this with all certainty? I can't. But I was concerned when I saw, the day we were paying tribute at the funeral of a former leader of the Conservative Party, to a person in this House I really liked, Larry Grossman, that here we were and in come the rule changes again. I remember saying to one of the moderate members of the caucus who has served here a while in the House, "You know what the government's going to do right now? They're going to bring in the rule changes," and he said, "Dave Johnson wouldn't do that." I had to say to him, "Dave Johnson's not going to do that. It's Mike Harris doing it but Dave Johnson has to deliver the goods on that." That was most unfortunate. I'm just saying, if you're going to do this, be up front with it, if you're proud of what you're doing.

We agree that more members should have the opportunity to participate and some of the rules you have will help that out a bit and some will not. What your government wants is fewer days and fewer question periods and that will be the effect of the motion. This House will sit fewer days than you might otherwise sit and you will have fewer question periods if these amendments to our rules go through.

I think that the time for debate is central to democracy. Let me tell you what happens when you start restricting debate. That's when the opposition starts looking for other ways to bring the government to a slower pace. I remember saying out in the hallway to many of the people who are involved in the press gallery — because it's a war of words out there as well, trying to convince people of the correctness of one's position.

I had to say to many of the columnists and writers out there that I didn't like what we had to go through. It was no more fun for those of us in opposition, I can assure you, than those in government. There's a risk, there's criticism, just as Mike Harris received some criticism when he engaged in reading his lakes and rivers, which I thought was justified, by the way, when he did that, for the period of time he did. It's a risk you take with the public and the public will say, "We don't necessarily agree with that," but you do it rarely.

The problem was there was no other way to continue debate. When you restrict debate, the old-fashioned filibuster debate — I'm not suggesting my friend who spoke for 17.5 hours, that perhaps we should be that long by any means, but I am suggesting that when you start restricting debate further, that's when the opposition tries stunts or extraordinary parliamentary manoeuvres to try to bring the government to a halt. I don't think that's good. None of us liked it.

I remember my friend from Renfrew North and I had our discussion with Bob Nixon over bell ringing. Bob

was never a person who liked bell ringing and I actually don't think Sean Conway ever liked bell ringing that much either. That was a new thing to bring governments to a halt. That was no fun either, because the bells rang and the government was halted, but wouldn't it have been much better if the opposition had to argue why what the government was doing was wrong, instead of being out in the hallway with bells ringing? The answer is yes, and there were rules brought in to stop that bell ringing, just as I understand you want to stop some of the extraordinary procedures the opposition can use at the present time — taking away the bargaining chips, as I say.

When Norm Sterling talked about the ability to slow the government down, he said you can't do it unless the opposition has some bargaining chips. I'll tell you, if you've got all the rule changes you had when the opposition goes into the meeting with the government House leader, there's virtually nothing we can say that we will do if the government doesn't kind of listen to some of the things we say, perhaps have a couple more days of hearings in areas where the government might not want them or perhaps have the staging or the dates of the hearings changed. We won't have the tools, we won't have the bargaining chips to be able to extract those concessions, which are often reasonable concessions.

I don't expect the government's going to have hearings all summer on anything but I do sometimes expect that there are a couple of communities which have a specific interest where you might want to go to discuss them. I want to use the example of grape growing. If there were a bill affecting the grape and wine industry, I would want that committee to be able to go to southwestern Ontario and to the Niagara Peninsula. If the government of the day didn't want to, it would be extraordinary, but maybe they would be embarrassed by something and wouldn't want to go there. We want to really put the lever on, we want to lever that so you go there. It may be uncomfortable for that day, but ultimately your bill's going to be better or your legislation better having heard the people.

Let me tell you something else that I think everybody here knows. If you give people their day in court, if you let them be heard, some are still not going to be satisfied at the end, I understand that, but by and large at least people can say, "I had my opportunity to have my say." That's the same as members of the House. If we have the opportunity to make our speeches in this House, and sometimes at greater length than you would like and sometimes more vociferously than perhaps you would like and sometimes in an uglier mood than perhaps you would like, at least we can say in opposition we did have the opportunity to place our position before the Government. Ultimately, with its 82 seats, it's all-powerful, overwhelming majority of 82 seats, the government will in the final analysis be able to put through the piece of legislation as it exists in its final stages.

What we are trying to do is to sometimes slow you down so you do it right instead of doing it quickly. I think the government benefits, I think the opposition benefits and I think the people ultimately benefit. We're not asking that you scrap everything in the package that you have. We think there are some things that are understandable, we even think there are some things that



may be desirable, and there are some things that are not. That's where our discussions with the government House leader will be helpful. It's a discussion that takes place and I understand why the government put it on the order paper, because it focuses attention. I don't like that, I wish it were another process, but it focuses attention. I understand that. There's a difference between agreeing and understanding; I understand that.

But what you're doing now is — because today you're going to go through the process of this debate; tomorrow the plans are to bring in a time allocation motion — you've pulled the pin on two grenades and put one in the pocket of the Liberal House leader and one in the pocket of the NDP House leader and said, "Now negotiate." I would prefer that you just had a couple of bullets in the chamber instead of having a couple of grenades as well, and then we're able to discuss on a better basis.

I don't think there's going to be a great incentive to do it, although I've been surprised, and this is quite surprising to me, the number of people who have said to me that they're concerned about the rule changes. They don't always know what they mean but they're concerned about them.

I was talking to a person two nights ago who generally I would think agrees with a lot of what you people are doing. He might vote for me because he knows me but he generally agrees with what you're doing. I said, "I'm going back tonight" — I was back in St Catharines — "to debate rule changes," and his reaction was, "Yes, those rule changes are a bit much, aren't they?" As I say, a person I would say is more conservatively inclined than liberally, certainly not NDP at all, and is a fiscal conservative and so on, said, "I'm concerned about them." Here's a person who's not directly affected but I'm going to tell you, as I said, perhaps through the television audience that might be watching tonight, this is the most important legislative measure this government has brought forward. Yes, there were other bills that were controversial and they were important and they brought about some change, but this opens the door to a government to shove everything through as it sees fit and that's why this is the most dangerous legislative initiative. It's the most dangerous because it greases the skids for the government.

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Non-cabinet members and even some cabinet members are going to be sorry about that because there are going to be times when you secretly want the opposition to slow things down. I've been a minister before and sat in a cabinet where I've disagreed with what the government was doing. I would never express it openly in the day, but I've hoped the opposition would at least slow that down or give the government a hard time so it might make a few changes, or even withdraw legislation.

That's not going to happen with the new rules because it's going to be too hard to do. But under the old rules, the possibility was there. It wouldn't always happen, but the possibility was there. I've even heard of cabinet ministers sometimes going to the opposition and saying, "If you are wise, you might make these arguments," and it can often be helpful to the cabinet ministers.

I think too the best rule changes are as a result of a consensus. It's not always easy to reach and sometimes it's impossible to reach, but I'll tell you they're the best rule changes, where there's a consensus, everybody gives a little and everybody understands what it's all about.

Lastly, I'm going to say, a group out there that has a special responsibility is the news media. By and large, editors tell the people who cover Queen's Park: "Look, we don't want rule changes stories. They're boring. They don't affect anybody. Nobody cares." Yet, ultimately, they have tremendous ramifications for the people.

There are controversial bills you're going to bring forward. That's why we're doing this in the House. You know that. You're going to be taking away rights from certain people and there's going to be some rancour over that. But we have a responsibility and the news media have a responsibility to focus on the rule changes, to see how easy they make that. Those who may be — I'm going to use the word "victims"; maybe it's too strong a word — the victims of your legislation are going to find out that the opposition has no chance to slow that down or perhaps even to stop the government, rarely and only momentarily, until they can reconsider. That's most unfortunate.

I think the news media has a special responsibility to be covering rule changes. If they think what you're doing is right, then that's fine, that's their opinion. But I think they should take an interest in this kind of debate. Did you see what it took for the opposition to get interested in it the other day? We asked some questions. The NDP asked some questions. We went out in the hallway for the scrum after. Were there any questions? No. When do we get some questions in the scrum?

**Mrs Johns:** When you —

**Mr Bradley:** No, I think that's a very unfair characterization. We went over very calmly, placed one copy of the rule book at the Premier's desk and the others in front of him, symbolically, and solemnly exited from the chamber. Only when that happened did the news media pay any attention. That's unfortunate.

Do you know what I would have preferred? I would have preferred they paid attention when we asked our questions. But they didn't, and that's the reality of today. That's what's going to happen as you tighten the rules of this House. You're going to have more and more of that and less and less of the democratic debate which has characterized this House over the years.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I regret very much that more members didn't have the opportunity to hear the comments of the member for St Catharines. I would like you to check to see if there is indeed a quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check if there is a quorum present.

**Clerk at the Table (Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** There is a quorum present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the amendments to the government motion on



rule changes. It is quite clear that one of the fundamental differences between the government party and the opposition parties is our concept of what it really is to have a democratic government. I think it's very clear from the comments that many of our colleagues on the government side have made during the course of this debate, both on the full motion and on the amendments that are currently before us, that they do not see the issues as being fundamental issues of democracy for the people we represent.

Instead of that, I would say to you, quite frankly, that many of the government backbenchers appear to be concerned about their own ability to stand in this place and express their views, as opposed to having government views, opposition views, third-party views aired thoroughly.

The reality is that when a government is a government, it has control over the agenda of this place. It brings forward government motions and the job of this place is to discuss government motions. Now it may be that the members of the opposition are taking exception and do not agree with the government position often. That's not always the case. We all can remember that last week we went through a number of pieces of legislation where there was fundamental agreement about the value of that legislation. We were able to go through it, examine it, talk about some of the concerns about it, talk about the implementation of it, and in fact that was done in a very amicable way.

But when the government members do everything they can to try to make sure that the government voice is the only one that is heard, then we have a problem, and it is our job, we are required, as opposition members, to speak for those in the population who did not vote for the government, who oppose the overwhelming ability of the government to push its agenda through. We all recognize that a majority government has that ability. What the government members seem to be disputing is the fact that we here should be able to do our job in expressing the voice of those who may not like pieces of that legislation.

The whole issue around speaking time is an interesting one because while it may be true that there are times when the entire 90 minutes of opener, for second reading in particular, may not be as focused as government members would like, the reality is that 90-minute speech by opposition members is the only signal to the public out there as to what the concerns about the legislation may be.

Similar is the 90 minutes the government minister or the parliamentary assistant who brings the motion for second reading, and in some cases third reading, has. Their job is to put the government's spin on the action that's being taken and to try to make sure that the message about the legislation is the message the government wants. Our job on this side of the House, quite clearly, is to critique that message and to critique the legislation; to say when a part of that legislation is good, and we have done that on many occasions on this side, but to point out the drawbacks in that legislation, to set the scene, as it were, for the kinds of questions, the kinds of issues that are raised when that legislation goes forward into committee.

When people say the 90-minute speeches are not substantive, there may be some cases where that is true, but in most cases, if the members were listening instead of being out of this place and having to be called in again and again on quorum calls, they would find that there is an analysis of the legislation that makes it easier for the public to understand what is coming forward.

The public does not have in front of it, as these things go through second reading, the actual legislation; the way this government works, very often there is a move to move forward on legislation the minute it is hot off the press and available. There is great reluctance to even look at the standing order that requires bills to be in printed form before they are discussed, because this government is in such a rush to move forward with legislation, and the government members, again and again, seem to misunderstand what their own role is and seem to have nothing but contempt for their own role.

2100

We've seen that in this discussion around this amendment to the motion, in the previous discussion around the motion itself, in the discussions around the Fewer Politicians Act, in every single committee where we have had to struggle very hard to get the committee examination of legislation out there in communities so that people can participate.

The reality is that the members of this government have very little respect for the democratic process. Their comments about 90 minutes versus 40 minutes show that very clearly and, frankly, also show that many of them have not listened to what goes on in this place during the leadoff speeches on second and third reading.

When I speak about third reading, very often the only clue that the public gets about the amendments that have come forward, the amendments that have been accepted and the amendments that have been turned down on a piece of legislation is in the 90-minute leadoff speech. That's extremely important, because for the public out there, it is important for us to help them to understand what the process has been, what has been looked at, what has been rejected by the government and what has been accepted by the government. People are not just talking for their own sake; they're talking about what is going to work, what has been changed as a result of the public process. It is a way of getting people involved in the political process.

I suggest that is precisely why the government members have been so scathing about this amendment. We have, I think really for the first time in Ontario's history, a government that doesn't believe in government; a government that sees its whole purpose as reducing the size and the process of government, bulling through their own interpretation of what's best for Ontario and trying to make sure that all those who have comments to the contrary are silenced as much as possible.

When the members of the back bench in the government party talk about their getting an opportunity to participate more in events here, I think they are fooling themselves. You are not understanding that your government House leader who keeps you from speaking now is going to keep you from speaking then. It isn't the length of time that is keeping you from speaking; it's his all-



fired rush to get things through in record time, to pile more and more on the plate of implementation when even at the beginning of the changes you have shown yourselves to be incompetent.

It has nothing to do with the number of minutes people speak whether you get to speak or not. What makes you think, that the whip won't be cracked and you won't be told, "We're going to let the opposition parties share whatever time is left again," exactly as they have, again and again, in the past, just so that the government agenda can move forward more swiftly. I don't think you should fool yourselves that it's going to make your role any more prominent.

We have said again and again that we think you ought to be able to express your opinions, that we think you too have an obligation to speak about what you're hearing in your constituencies. We would prefer that it were less self-serving, less government-serving sometimes than some of the comments that we hear you make, because we often are in your ridings too and we know that the unanimity of approval for your proposals is not there in the communities any more than any of us have it in our communities. We know that there is a real core of opposition to many of the things you are doing throughout the province, and it is stronger in some places than others.

I would agree, and I think all of us would agree, that you ought to have the opportunity to get up and examine some of these issues, get on the record, have your constituents see you standing in this place working on their behalf or see you standing in this place toeing the government line and not listening to them, which is what I really think would be the case.

We don't think the way to achieve that is to cut down on the amount of time people have to discuss things here. The government House leader has within his hands now the capacity to give you the ability to participate. We notice that when you get the floor you very seldom fold after 10 minutes. The member for Mississauga South used every speck of her time, and we watched the member for Scarborough East the other night when we were talking about Bill 98, the Development Charges Act, go on and on, almost his whole 90 minutes. It's not as if there isn't enough to say when you are engaged in the legislation that is before us, because you too, when you do get an opportunity to speak, often take the full time allotted to you, and so you should. We are not disagreeing with that.

Your problem of not getting heard in this place has nothing to do with the amount of time that the standing rules allow. It has everything to do with the decision by your House leader and your cabinet that you will not have that opportunity in here. If you think that's going to change because the amount of time changes, you're dreaming in Technicolor. I do not think you are going to get any more public exposure to your constituents that you do now, except it may be that some of these evening sessions will be designed so that there can be further discussion of some private members' issues.

But you all know that you still need the House leader's acceptance before those private members' issues go to committee or go any further. You know how many are sitting piled up that cabinet is not bringing forward because they run counter to your policies or create a diversion from your very, very strong and singleminded

message, and you all know that. So if you think this is going to change the reality of your ability to speak in this House and gain profile, you need to think again.

One of the reasons we want to amend standing order 9(c), to delete the sections of the motion which amend standing order 9(c), is simply that it will not have any of the beneficial effects you think it will have, and it will have the effect of stifling the ability of the opposition to raise questions and concerns about the legislation that's brought forward. It will severely hamper our ability to do the job the people in our constituencies elected us to do.

This is very much an issue of the privilege of members of this House. I agree with those of you who feel that your privileges and your ability to represent your constituents are hampered by the all-fired hurry of your House leader; that you are not allowed to speak to things that come up in this House. I agree that your privileges are being damaged. There is only one solution to that and that is for your House leader to stop preventing you from participating in the debate. That option is there now and it ought to be there for you.

That doesn't mean we think it is possible for us to simply accede to having our privileges likewise destroyed. Your whole objective in setting the time limits as they are in your motion is to silence opposition, to prevent yourselves from having to listen to those who disagree with you. So of course we are in favour of deleting the sections of the motion which amend standing order 9(c).

To go on to the other section that the amendment is for, the motion to amend standing order 24, to enable the government not only at a moment's notice to call the House back and to sit in the evenings, we don't object to sitting in the evenings. You have never found us objecting to a length of time as long as there is business to do. We have not voted against the motions that have come forward at all in terms of extending the work we do when there are things on the order paper that need to be dealt with. That is not a reality.

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What I will say is that for this government to then say not only with very little or no notice — and it was no notice in the original motion — can the House be brought back to sit in the evening, but that it will count as a second sessional day, a sessional day being a very important item in this place — a sessional day as it is defined in our standing orders is the amount of time that counts as a full day of the session. The motion to amend standing order 24 literally gives you two days in one without the accountability of a question period.

You try to claim, and we hear many of you saying, "We are simply bringing our standing orders in line with other legislatures." That simply isn't the case if you really look at parliamentary rules elsewhere. Where there are night sittings, the accountability that is so inherent in question period is not lost, as it would be in this motion. We are prepared to sit at night as long as this is an extension of the day so that we can complete debate. Or, if we were to be called back, the other suggestion would be, okay, a question period and then another session.

Of course you folks want it all, and that has been just the hallmark of your entire rule around here. You want what you want, and what you most want is to get your own way, to bully your way through this place, to be able



to change the rules to reflect your own disrespect of the legislative process. It makes me very tired to hear sanctimonious claims of reverence for democracy from members of the government party when they know very well that in legislatures around the world the opposition, against great odds, are those who often speak against the tyranny of the majority. You don't have a corner on love and respect for democracy. We would not be here in the opposition if we did not have an infinite respect for the importance in the democratic process of the clearly articulated view of those who do not agree with a majority government.

The member for Algoma-Manitoulin pointed out to you that our job is to represent the majority of people who did not vote for you, did not vote for this government. The majority of people did not vote for this government. They voted for people within their own party, the party they felt best represented them, and the majority did not vote for you. That happened with us. We know what that's like. We had a majority government but we understood that it very important for us to recognize at all times that although we had a majority government, we had not won a majority of the votes of the electorate —

**Mr Young:** Social contract.

**Mrs Boyd:** — and you need to know that that's the case.

My friend over here who thinks he's Abraham Lincoln keeps talking about the social contract, but we paid the price for the social contract, didn't we? I expect you will pay the price for the actions that you are taking.

**Mr Young:** Did you vote for the social contract or not?

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** It was a disgrace.

**The Speaker:** Members for Halton Centre and Halton North, I warn you to come to order. That's the third time I've mentioned it. Member for London Centre.

**Mrs Boyd:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The day one of you votes against your government will indeed be a red-letter day. There are those of you who speak against your government, who have made even stronger comments than we have on this side of the House about the lack of democratic process within your government. The day that we see people having the courage and the integrity to stand in this place and vote against the government will indeed be a day. It will be interesting to see what happens then to those people, having been ostracized as they have for what they said without voting against the government.

I think what we really see is a group of people who did not know when they got into government, except for those who had been in government before, that government involves a good deal of public knowledge about what government is going to do. I think there was a belief that if you win, you can do whatever you like. We've heard those kinds of statements from ministers all along. The Premier is the best example. He arrogantly stands there and says, "We consulted with people before we were elected; we don't need to consult with them now," even though many of the promises that were made have been broken and many of the changes that have occurred in terms of what people expected to happen have been quite shocking for people.

When you are in government there is a process of government. One of the things you do when you pledge allegiance as government is that you pledge allegiance to that democratic process. You don't just pledge allegiance to the Queen or pledge allegiance to your Premier. The whole idea is that what makes all of us equal here is that we are all equally responsible for trying to protect the democratic process in our province. When we as opposition members, as the third party, see you flagrantly through your actions destroying that democratic process, it's our job to speak up. It's our job to do whatever we can do under the rules to try and slow you down, to try and alert the public out there of what you are about. If you know much about history you will understand that has been the process in democratic institutions for a long time.

You are not above the law simply because you are in a position where you are making new laws and changing old laws. You are responsible under and before the law just as anyone else is. That is why today we have had this great discussion about your Premier's refusal to understand that the breaking of a law around integrity that we all passed in this place is important, that it casts aspersions on the government that protects those who have been found guilty of breaching those laws.

If we as opposition members are in a position where we are not able to speak, through question period whenever there is a sessional day as is the issue with section 24, or when we have an opportunity to debate different pieces of legislation or motions that the government brings forward, then we will not be able to do our job, and our privileges will be very, very much diminished in this place.

It is quite apparent that members of the government do not understand how intimately all of these issues are intertwined. You clearly don't understand the passion that is here on our side of the House in terms of the very autocratic actions you have taken not just once but many times, and the necessity for us to take any means that are available to us to counter the weight of your tyranny, the tyranny of the majority. That's the job of people who are in opposition; it's our job. You need to remember that when your party was in opposition that was your job. We did recognize that, just as when the Liberals were in power, it was the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP who had to work all the time to limit the power of their majority, particularly during that time when they had 95 members in this House. It was extremely difficult to get minority views across.

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What all of us need to remember is that our seats today may not be our seats tomorrow. The next election will be another whole world for all of us. It may well be that those of you who are most vehement about these rule changes will find yourselves victimized by them and hampered in your ability to act on behalf of your constituents. The balance in this place comes from the fact that we need to go to the people every once in a while, and we never know, with the volatility of the electorate, who will be in a position of power and who will be in a position of opposition. When we make decisions about how this place operates, we need to be very clear that



although we may be the majority one day, we are not necessarily the majority the next.

It is very important that we not question one another's sincerity in our beliefs, in our feelings, in our passion about democracy and about the rules in this place as I have heard some members do. I don't at all suggest that you are not sincere in your vision of how you think democracy would work more efficiently if you could get your own way quicker; I know you're sincere about that. That's how you look at government. That's why you decreased the number of representatives, why you keep hacking away at the amount of time that people can go out on the road, why you now want to hack away, as you do in this motion that is before us which we're trying to amend, the amount of time that can be spent, first of all, in discussing issues as they come forward and then in terms of holding the government accountable.

That is the whole issue. You are sincere. You are sincere in your disrespect for the political process. Your own words convict you of that: the Fewer Politicians Act. You are in the process of destroying the political process at the local level all over this province, limiting the availability of local representation to the people who need to have access to their politicians, because you don't respect the political process.

That's why we are bringing forward these amendments, because we think these are the two key amendments that are destructive of the democratic process in this place: first, the limiting of debate in terms of the ability of the opposition to thoroughly explain exactly what it is in a bill that concerns them; and second, of course, the lack of accountability by the government if it can, on a moment's notice, simply double the amount of time, the number of sessional days, without being accountable through question period.

It strikes me very much that these are the kinds of amendments that many House leaders would love to have in the standing rules. The House leader's job is a job of getting legislation through. But every representative in this place who is not a House leader ought to be very sceptical of motions that limit debate and limit accountability. Every single one of us who is not a government House leader has an obligation to try and protect the rights of the minority from the tyranny of the majority.

I certainly will be supporting the amendment to standing order 9(c) and to standing order 24. I hope that everyone else will as well.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** I'm certainly glad to join in this historic occasion of a time for getting on with getting the job done in terms of governmental priorities, in terms of changing some of the fundamental blockages in this House.

Je suis fier de participer dans la discussion à changer les règlements de l'Assemblée législative.

We have heard tonight, and other times during the past number of days, about the effects and side-effects that this particular set of proposals would have on democracy. There's a submission and a thesis, an argument, made by members opposite that in some way, shape or other you are limiting democracy in this House when you change rules which suddenly limit the time that members have to speak.

We've heard from the member for London South, who just referred to the whole idea that limiting of a member's time to speak in this House is equated somehow or other with limiting democracy, and yet in their own particular set of rule changes made in 1992 and 1993, they actually did bring in a number of limitations on speaking. They limited opening speeches to 90 minutes, subsequent speeches to 30 minutes. I guess at that particular point in the argument that wasn't a limit on democracy; that was not an anti-democratic initiative. Well, if they can portray these particular proposals as anti-democratic, we can label the same way with intent and passion when they made their changes in 1992 and 1993.

I think members of moderation from all three parties understand pretty clearly that limiting the time of members to speak in no way, shape or form limits democracy, because if you go back to a root source of the definition of democracy, there isn't one allusion in the definition of democracy as set out in the Concise Oxford Dictionary. It clearly states "practising, advocating, or constituting...favouring social equality." It goes on to talk about the Democratic Party in the United States: "Government by the people" direct or representative, "form of society... ignoring hereditary class distinctions and tolerating minority views."

We've heard from the member for London South that she ascribes to us in this government that we have sincerity and then proceeds immediately to impugn the motives of the House leader and all other colleagues on this side who support these particular proposals in terms of making this place operate in an effective and a clear, smooth-running manner so that members from all sides get an opportunity to speak.

Why is it that we can have 90 minutes of an unlimited time within which the members of the opposition parties get to speak on matters of the day, yet that does not accord itself over here very often?

The member for London South seems to think we are somehow or other fooling ourselves into thinking that we will have less time. I couldn't agree less with her, because if you look through the records of a large number of members from all three parties on any particular subject that they have a passionate interest in, they have always had the opportunity to usually speak.

What I find most disconcerting about the whole direction of this debate about the rule changes is that I went back and looked at the member for Nepean's introductory remarks and rationale regarding the necessity for these rule changes, and one of the most surprising things I found in looking through those remarks was that in the last 10 years only three times have governments in those last 10 years voted on a budget. In other words, 70% of the time you had governments not presenting a budget inside this House, which I always thought was the fundamental foundation for modern democratic parliamentary government.

If you look back at the non-confidence votes of various governments federally, you would find that governments fell, particularly the federal Conservative government of 1979, on a failure of motion of confidence in the budget.

Yet that is not a centrepiece in the consideration of debate in this place: 70% of the time, budgets were



brought in and voted on very quietly or passed through concurrences. That brings up another centrepiece to the thesis the opposition parties submit here, that by limiting debate somehow or other you're limiting democracy. Yet members opposite who represented the two previous governments in the last 10 years only subscribed on a 30% basis that a budget was a significant enough document to have it voted on by its representatives of the party.

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It's a rather bizarre contradiction and a bizarre submission that the members opposite are making in defence of democracy, yet when it comes to the practising of democracy in this particular Legislature we end up with budgets not being submitted for a formal vote, which leads to a second significant implication: If you don't have a budget vote, you don't have a budget debate.

If debate is as important as members opposite claim it to be, that it is the heart and soul of democracy, why didn't they follow through on the practice of having formal votes on budgets that were presented by the government of the day? These rule changes will bring that about and will in effect enhance and increase the value of debate in this House. If you accept the thesis that a budget is a centrepiece of a democratic parliamentary government's platform, its agenda, undoubtedly you ought to have a vote on it and you ought to have formal debate, whether it's a 90-minute debate or a 30-minute debate by members down the line. There ought to be a full discussion of all the social, economic implications of that particular budget, because it maps out and creates the benchmarks for where a government is going economically. It sets social policy.

It's a rather false impression created by members of the opposition parties when they so passionately and vehemently defend democracy, yet when you look at their past practice, using the budget as a key item to measure how well they believed in democracy in terms of debating a budgetary motion, a motion of confidence or non-confidence, in point of fact 30% is the batting average. It seems to me that's not a very good indicator of their passionate belief in democracy in that particular context.

Now I would like to turn to some of the remarks that have been made over the past two years regarding what I find one of the most abominable incidents; it has been referred to as the Curling incident by members of this government and by members opposite. It was a neat rationalization created by the member for Riverdale in her remarks of last week, which I would like to quote for a moment, about how they came to create what she calls the "strategy" regarding the Curling incident.

"When the government talks, repeatedly there are two incidents it likes to bring up as examples of why we need to fix the system here a little bit. They refer to the Alvin Curling affair, and I notice many of the members referring to that." This is the key quote: "I want to remind the members of the government that it wasn't the Alvin Curling affair; it was a strategy worked out by both of the opposition parties, yes, together. Because at that time we were very aware, when these huge stacks...were dumped on our desks...."

Can you imagine that a member opposite uses what became a very despicable incident in this House, a tragedy for many —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** That's your opinion.

**Mr Hastings:** That's not just my opinion, but many members of the public out there, unless you haven't been talking to many members of the public, that a minority viewpoint can submit itself and halt democracy. The people across there who are talking about —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Member for Halton Centre, I can take care of the House, thanks very much.

**Mr Young:** I can't hear, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Put your earpiece in. I can take care of the House.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I'm not debating with you. Please come to order.

**Mr Hastings:** The members opposite talk about a passionate defence of democracy, but if you look back at the consequences of that event, there is undoubtedly a very bad taste left in the mouths of not only members in this House, members of the government and even members opposite; as the member for Mississauga South was referring to earlier, when this incident is cited in parliamentary history — you talk about it as a defence of democracy. It is not really a defence of democracy at all. It is a halting, a shutdown, a complete cancellation of parliamentary government — a cancellation.

Yet members opposite, over there, point to that with pride. Can you imagine? If they can't be more inventive, more imaginative in how they can get their policy viewpoints across than simply bowing out of the ball game, it seems to me we have come to a sad day for democracy in this country, of which they speak so passionately.

Earlier tonight the member for Mississauga South was referring to the history, the traditions of democracy in this House. She spoke about the Curling incident within the context of what that particular incident in history must have meant for veterans of the First World War, the Second World War or the Korean War. Those folks went to the defence of democracy, yet we have across the way the justification made that somehow or other — I think it sullies the whole historic record of why those veterans went into the Second World War. It was to defend democracy against the tyranny of Fascism.

**Ms Martel:** Dictatorship. Your members are calling it like it is: dictatorship. Three of your own are calling it like it is.

**Mr Hastings:** The member for Sudbury doesn't have to provide us with any lecture on democracy when she was one of the prime people involved in the whole strategy, a complete destruction and cancellation of democracy.

**Ms Martel:** A dictatorship; that's exactly what it is.

**The Speaker:** The member for Sudbury East, please come to order. I'd ask the members to come to order. The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale does have the floor. He has 16 minutes left to complete his speech. I'd ask you to cooperate.

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**Mr Hastings:** I know this is a sensitive point with members opposite. If they really talked to their folks back home in the constituencies, there is undoubtedly an



unsavoury memory left in the minds of many people about that event, about the destruction —

**Ms Martel:** Not in Sudbury East, my friend.

**Mr Hastings:** If they don't understand in Sudbury, I guess we do have many failures of democracy in this country and another reason this particular institution is failing in its institutional credibility. That's another theme we ought to make some remarks about.

When you look at the rule changes and you look at the limitation on the time of people to debate, so-called debate — and I share some of the sentiments made earlier tonight by the member for Halton Centre about his impressions of the first two years of being in this great Legislative Assembly, that when people refer to debate, in the traditional sense of that term there is really no debate in this House. It's really an exchange or a monologue of ideas that sort of go across and re-echo in this chamber.

If you had a debate in the classic, traditional sense that was meant back in high school or back in college days, you had a formalized resolution. You have some semblance of that when a government presents a particular bill. But when you go through most of the comments by members and you look for kernels of new ideas, where you really get an engagement of ideas, it's a pretty puny, modest record. The only real place that we get any true debate, in the old traditional, classic sense of talking about the values of democracy, is in parliamentary and private members' hour. That's where members have an opportunity to sort of drop their party hats and become a little more human and appreciate the viewpoints of members opposite. In many instances they are at their finest at that time because they present a specific alternative, a bill they're pushing, and they believe in it fervently and passionately.

But once removed from those two hours on Thursday mornings, you go back and you look at the records of so-called debate in this House, you basically get, from all sides — I will count myself into that context as well — not a real exchange of ideas, not a vigorous debate, but simply a monologue of repetition, over and over and over. When you look at the overall quality of debate, you don't really get out of that, you can leave today or the viewer can say: "Jeez, that member brought up a really salient point. That member won that particular point on that debate." You don't get that any more in this kind of forum, I don't think, except in the private members' hour and of course in the usual traditional — sometimes the interjections are more on the spot than the presentations by the members.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** We agree.

**Mr Hastings:** I know you'd agree with that.

The House leader for the official opposition pointed out that there is going to be a very bad taste left in his mouth about these proposed rule changes because he argues that these rule changes ought to be brought about by negotiation, which when you think of it is an excellent idea. It should be the way we deal with changing House rules. But in point of fact the history of negotiations in this particular Parliament, if you talk to the previous House leader or the new House leader, when a transaction or a commitment is made, it doesn't normally get kept;

it doesn't normally get retained. It either gets cancelled or adjusted or, in some instances, outright ignored.

We could point to various issues, various bills over the last two years where that history of negotiations that is so valued by House leaders broke down and we ended up reverting to other alternatives, given the bill that was in front of the Legislature that day.

So I think the negotiations strategy certainly has not worked when it came to House order and decorum resulting out of the Curling incident. I can remember as a member of the Legislative Assembly committee, the member for Hamilton Centre said at one time near the conclusion on that issue and the surrounding issue of security in this place that came out of that particular situation that House order and decorum had been dealt with. You can go back to March 1996 and you will see that on the record.

It's somewhat shocking to think that members opposite thought that House order and decorum had been dealt with. It has never really been dealt with arising out of that situation because there was always the silent if not implicit threat that if the members of the government on the Legislative Assembly committee proceeded to deal with House order and decorum, there again would have been an outbreak of chaos, but renamed here by the member for Riverdale as a "strategy," a strategy of cancellation and halting.

To continue on the theme of what the opposition claims is the limiting of democracy, one of the key items, one of the key proposals that was brought forward by the independent member for Elgin and has been captured in these proposed rule changes is the role of the independent member. I wanted to highlight that for a moment, that in point of fact, right now an independent member of this Legislature gets little opportunity to raise matters in the House, in terms of question period, in terms of participation on committees. That is a particular proposal that the member for Nepean has included in the House rule changes which I think is an essential advancement of democracy for independent members. It heralds a new day in parliamentary government in terms of even that portion of the package.

It says, "Independent members' recognition in the House and membership on committees." I think that is a key consideration because it gives the member for Elgin the opportunity, on a more continuing and frequent basis, to get issues of his constituents before him. The present set of rules only allow that to occur with the goodwill of the government of the day, and I think it has frustrated independent members in Parliament. I think that's an advance for democracy, not a strike against it.

Finally, I would like to conclude my remarks —

**Mr Wildman:** Good.

**Mr Hastings:** That is an excellent interjection, I suppose, in a way, "Good," but it does indicate what the member for Mississauga South alluded to earlier. I think that is part of the whole argument of the failure of this place in institutional terms. Its credibility is severely lacking, and I'll take my share of the responsibility with interjections; I've made several over the last two years. But I've tried to be a little more mindful than usual; I may be failing. But I think it is a good indicator of the



lack of compadre, of friendship or of interchange or of tolerance between and among members in this House.

There is a certain sanctimoniousness, unfortunately, that gets read into remarks made. I find it distressing but it seems to be a new reality, given today's social etiquette, or lack of it, and manners. We've had lots of that in this House.

I would like to say in a final comment regarding the remarks of the member for London Centre in which she said that this particular government and members of this government have little tolerance, understanding or acceptance of democratic tradition, I find that somewhat unfortunate, that she is trying to put that tag on to us simply because we are making these House rule changes. Certainly there is a limitation on the time that members can speak, but to impugn the motives of people in government or in opposition simply because you are making some fundamental rule changes, in my estimation, is a serious matter in terms of trying to create better tolerance among members from all sides. I find that rather distressing.

She also made the point that because we do not understand, tolerate nor truly accept democratic traditions and how they operate, how democracy and parliamentary government operate, somehow or other that leads to a lack of accountability. Yet when you go through, and I listened carefully to her remarks, how much accountability was there when you had a government that sat for about 25 to 30 days in 1995? I think we need to put that into the context of this whole debate.

Finally, I would like to say that these particular rule changes will not limit democracy in any way, shape or form. They will advance it. They will create new opportunities for members of all parties to speak out and have greater participation in the operations of committees. It will also give you, Speaker, the significant role of being able to make this House operate in a more effective and timely manner, and therefore it will advance democracy.

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**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to rise to speak to the amendment standing in the name of the member for Cochrane North, which amendment concerns two issues: the two-for-one special, which I agree should be removed from the package, and more important, the question of the length of speeches, which is the specific issue, and some of the attendant questions to which I want to turn my attention.

**Mr Young:** How long are you going to speak for?

**Mr Conway:** Brevity is not one of my more notable characteristics. I want to talk, I hope with some seriousness tonight, about a subject that's probably not going to please some of my own colleagues, although I was struck as I came into the House earlier by the remarkable statesmanship and equanimity of Mr Bradley. I thought for a moment he was applying for a job at the United Nations. In my many years of knowing him I have never seen such quietism and such evenhandedness as I saw from Senator Bradley.

I must say — she was in the chamber a while ago but she's not here now — I was out on a parish visit this afternoon with Mr Robert F. Nixon and we were sipping tea under the maple trees in the Niagara Peninsula. As I

came back in from a not very pleasant drive from down in the peninsula I heard the dulcet tones of Mrs Marland reminding us all about the statesmanship of Mr Robert F. Nixon. She's right, you know. She and Bob Nixon not only used to share great speeches, they shared many a good chocolate bar in this chamber in the time they were here together. I didn't hear somebody else, although I think I heard some reference to the Gettysburg address by somebody in here tonight.

I want to make a couple of comments about length of speeches and quality of speeches. Bob Nixon made many good speeches; he made some great speeches. I would argue one of the reasons that Mrs Marland rightly observed the eloquence and statesmanship of people like Bob Nixon, and he wasn't alone — Bob Welch was here when I came, but I'll talk about Nixon because the shy and retiring member for Mississauga South raised the issue earlier in the debate.

Bob Nixon grew up in a family where by the time he was born, daddy had been here for five or six years. He'd already been in the cabinet, and Nixon was to spend his entire youth and adolescence imbibing the business of politics. That was reflected in the way he spoke around this place. Mrs Marland was absolutely right: Nixon could on the drop of a hat entertain you with a very good speech on an amendment to the Milk Act, how the Queen Elizabeth Way got its name, some remote township in northeastern Ontario or some arcane aspect of these parliamentary rules. He could do that in part because of his very particular skill, but also because of his particular personal upbringing and education. It's not one that everybody had the opportunity to share. He has great stories and I hope some day he writes the book he keeps threatening to write. Those speeches came out of an environment and they came out of a context, and he worked at it all the time.

Churchill, who is famous for his great speeches, rarely made a speech without a lot of practice. He practised all the time. He worked on the lines, he wrote them and he recited them privately. There's a great story about how Churchill went to visit for a weekend with one of his colleagues and gave the hostess a rather bad time because there wasn't a sufficiently large mirror in the bedroom. Why, Mrs Runciman wanted to know, did he need a mirror of that size? Because he was practising the speech he was going to give the next day at the mechanics' institute or whatever.

A point was made here tonight about the Gettysburg address. If you haven't read it recently, you should, because it is a truly beautiful speech. It took two minutes and 40 seconds to give. I think it's 272 words long.

**Mr Young:** It's 274.

**Mr Conway:** It's 274. A great book has been written by a fellow named Garry Wills called *Lincoln at Gettysburg*. It's a brilliant piece of work. It won a Pulitzer Prize a couple of years ago, as my friend from Wellington seems to know — a great, great book and a great speech, a speech that's really a prayer more than an oration.

The point I want to make about the Gettysburg address is that it was very much second fiddle. Lincoln was not the principal speaker at Gettysburg that day in November 1863. The principal speaker that day at Gettysburg was

the famous mid-19th-century American orator Edward Everett, who spoke for over two hours in length. They all came to hear Everett. This very controversial American President with the high-pitched voice and the very disagreeable visage was not the featured speaker.

**Mr Young:** Who remembers Everett?

**Mr Conway:** Who remembers Everett? Well, a lot of New Englanders remember Mr Everett. He was, after all, Secretary of State and a Boston Brahmin and a lot of other things.

The point I want to make is that we talk now about Gettysburg, but if you look at the press reviews of November 1863, it was Everett's speech which captured the headlines. The President's oration was a very brief little prayer that Everett understood the significance of, no doubt about that, but the principal speaker of the day was Edward Everett and he spoke with an elaborate prepared text that went on in excess of two hours.

You look at the great parliamentary performers of this place, but let's go to the more illustrious precedents: Go to Westminster, go to Ottawa. I'm in the process now of finishing a book about Gladstone, a marvellous book by Roy Jenkins. Gladstone was an enormous power in 19th-century parliamentary Britain: Chancellor of the Exchequer for 12 years, Prime Minister for 14, led four different administrations. Gladstone rarely spoke for less than two hours. He would come to the House with his Irish universities bill or one of his budgets and literally blow the place away with a three- or four-hour oration. Disraeli would match it with greater colour, if not greater conscience.

Read Arthur Meighen's speeches about the railway unification bills in the Canadian Parliament of 50 and 60 years ago, four- and five-hour masterpieces; Edward Blake on the Orange societies bill; Edward Blake on the Riel rebellion. But 20-minute speeches, 40-minute speeches? Surely you jest. It was different and I'm not here to argue that we should return to those times. But the world from which we come was a world in which parliamentarians of note worked long and hard, read widely, thought seriously and spoke at great length about the great issues of their time.

I was reading last night, and Mrs Marland knows this — because this Gladstone book, which I do recommend, really is a good piece of work — the memoirs of Lord Asquith, long-time Prime Minister of Great Britain, a colleague of Gladstone. It is a bit of a history lesson, but these rules come out of the history. There's a great temptation around this place to say, "Let us just take, for example, the Ottawa rule, and apply it to Toronto." I understand that argument. It's not always inappropriate. But if Winston Churchill came here, he'd look at this place and he'd say: "I'll tell you one thing that's wrong with this place: these seats, these benches. Get them out of here."

When Westminster was bombed in the early days of the war, it was Churchill who insisted the chamber be rebuilt in precisely the way it had been. His argument was that to get a good parliamentary debate you needed a sense and a geography of intimacy. The notion of benches would certainly interfere with that.

2200

How many of you have been to the actual chamber at Westminster? It's not much bigger than this place and they've got 635 members. It is not intended to seat everybody. In fact I think when the place is full, and the clerk could tell me, it probably means 35% of the House has to stand.

The argument was, and it was Churchill's argument, that if you were going to have a good parliamentary debate, it had to be intimate. These benches and, God forbid, these prepared speeches — the notion that the ministry would prepare speeches for members was beyond the pale.

Asquith — well, maybe that's too arcane. Well, I will. Margaret laughed last night when I — I was just thinking about some eloquence. Listen to this. Oh, this is a famous line, actually not given in Parliament but it's typical of the sort of thing Disraeli would have said. Disraeli is about to become Prime Minister for the second time. He's Leader of the Opposition and he's looking at the first Gladstone government, which is coming unstuck and is about to be defeated.

What does the then leader of the Conservative party, Mr Disraeli, say? "As I sat opposite the Treasury Bench," the Gladstone ministry "reminded me of one of those marine landscapes not very unusual on the coasts of South America. You behold a range of exhausted volcanoes. Not a flame flickers on a single pallid crest, but the situation is still dangerous. There are occasional earthquakes and ever and anon the dark rumbling of the sea."

I wish we had some of that in here. We don't, and for reasons — not very many Disraelis or Lincolns or Blakes were born and raised in this environment. But I agree with Mr Hastings who spoke earlier, because I think one of the things he was trying to say, and if I misstate this then he can correct me, and let me say it in my own name: I'm less concerned about the length of, the containment of speeches, though I think this package is too restrictive and that's why I support the Wood amendment, but I am even more concerned about the quality of speeches in this place.

We are, all of us, not working hard enough, and I accept my share of responsibility. I've delivered some pretty bad stuff over the years. The notion that you just get up and fill time should not be the guiding notion. I was in here last night. I've never served on municipal government. I thought my friend Lalonde from Prescott-Russell delivered a spirited speech about municipal affairs. I was interested. I know his area a bit, and I thought: "That's a good speech. He's gotten up and he's getting a few things off his chest that told me something about what's going on in that part of southeastern Ontario."

Marchese gets up here every so often and goes on about the cultural community, about which I know not very much, and I always learn things. Murdoch will make a speech about some part of the western peninsula and I think: "It's kind of interesting. I didn't know that." I get a sense that there is some personal investment in the speech. There's not enough of that. There are too many bad speeches being given in this place.



**Mr Rollins:** Do we get a fax copy?

**Mr Conway:** No, but I say that very seriously. Mrs Marland makes a very good point. If Nixon were up here — when I came here — you stayed and listened because it was lively, it was insightful, it was informed and it was engaging. If Welch was up for the government at the time, or Renwick and Lewis and Deans, for new members like myself, you wanted to be here because you learned something substantive. You mightn't agree with it, but you learned something about a subject area and an approach to it and you saw some very good people practising their trade. This is an art at which you have to work.

I want to make that point very seriously tonight. Of course, if good speeches are being made, we have an obligation surely to one another to listen. That's not to say we shouldn't interject. In fact Churchill's argument is that you want a very kind of intimate environment so there can be some engagement. Nobody who has ever sat in government is unaware of the complaint that current government members have made about: "They just won't listen and they just won't be polite. Oh, they're so rude and crude, those oppositionists." Well, that's often a very valid complaint.

You can imagine how people who have been around a while say: "Mr Davis just announced what kind of a school policy?" "Mr Rae just said what about insurance?" "Mr Peterson, what has he just said about free trade?" It is very hard to be a Boy Scout when that kind of stuff is going on. We all react predictably.

This also allows me an opportunity to raise a concern that I've been feeling for too many years now and it's very difficult because we have a very peculiar doctrine of democratic government — it's parliamentary — and the notion of responsible government means something most people don't quite understand. The notion is that people in our system get to elect a Parliament and Parliament gets to choose a government. With the advent of parties it is generally a foregone conclusion, but it was interesting being around here in 1985 when we had basically a hung jury. Frank Miller led a party that got 52 seats; Peterson led a party that got 48 seats; Bob Rae led a party that got 25 seats. It was amazing how many people, not just inside the political class but how many pundits thought, "Frank has four more than Dave, so that means there has to be a Miller government."

All it meant was that Parliament would meet and Parliament would decide. On that particular occasion, Parliament decided something that was a little unusual. Two party leaders representing 65% of those who were elected in that May 2, 1985, election decided to form an alliance to create a new government. On June 12, 1985, I think it was, this Parliament voted to retire the Miller administration and create the new administration.

**Mr Froese:** And went downhill ever since.

**Mr Conway:** Well, whether it did or not is not something I want to talk about today. The point I want to talk about is that Parliament decided that. Parliament has, in our system, some very significant responsibilities. Let me be very blunt about this. My grandfather was here for nearly 20 years in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, and he lived to be a very old man. I often listened to him talk

about his life here, first in opposition, then in government, and then in opposition. The independent attitude of a number of the members was quite remarkable. They obviously felt a loyalty and a fealty to their leader and to their caucus, but it was not absolute. Governments often lost votes, sometimes very interestingly.

What do I see, not just today, but what have I been seeing here for some time now? That the life and role and responsibility as a member of Parliament is a notion increasingly foreign to most people. Most people who get elected now want power. Power in our system is the executive council; it's cabinet. The election is held and what do we all think and what do we all do? Well, if you're not in cabinet or about to join cabinet, you are somehow personally and professionally inadequate, and however are you going to explain that to your spouse, your kids, your neighbours and your community? It's all about cabinet, it's all about government. Of course, the opposition isn't really much different. They're animated by the same kinds of things.

2210

The notion that people are serious about their role as a member of Parliament, as a member of the Legislature, is a very diminished notion around here. What has it led to? This may be indelicate, but it has led to some of the most transparent and shameless — I'll use a 19th-century expression that Sir John A. would have used on a late night sitting. He would have said: "It is obscene, the amount of ministerial boot-licking that's going on around me. It is shameless. It is unedifying." He would have added a few other things to it.

It is almost embarrassing and humiliating for self-respecting men and women, who put their names on the ballot and their credibility on the line before their electors — not an insignificant commitment — and they win sufficient suffrage at the local level, to come to Ottawa or Toronto or Winnipeg, and then they do what? It's as though their spine turns into some kind of noodle, and a wet one at that. When Guy Giorno or Hershell Ezrin or David Agnew says, "Jump," the member says, "How high and how far?" There was a time when people would say, "Go to hell, Mr Giorno, Mr Agnew and Mr Ezrin."

I'm not here to argue that we want loose fish and mavericks all over the place, Mr Murdoch, because there has to be an order and there has to be a discipline.

I'm going to tell you, I think it is a fair observation to look at these rules and ask, as a package, who wins? I can tell you who wins. Government wins. The executive arm of government wins. Mr Bradley was very right. I don't care whether it's Dave Johnson, Jim Bradley, Bud Wildman; if you've ever been in government or if you ever think you're going to be in government, trust me, you're going to like this. You're going to like it a lot. There will be very considerable reluctance to retreat from this set of proposals.

I don't want to be too inflammatory, but it's rather as if the closer you get to the shaded greens of Stornaway, the more attractive is that front door, the more compelling is that master bedroom, the more inviting is that larder, and many a virtuous soul has lost his way on the road from Calgary to Acacia Drive in Rockcliffe Park.

I say in all seriousness to Parliament, as Parliament, let us reflect upon our responsibilities. Parliament, as



Professor Franks, a noted Canadian political scientist, observes in another book I think you should read some time, *The Parliament of Canada*, has four functions: First, it's to make a government; second, it's to make a government work, to give it the resources to function; third, it's to make a government behave. That's why you'll see the Leader of the Opposition, whether it's McGuinty, Rae or Harris, standing up and sometimes being indelicately accusatory, because the function that the opposition has and Parliament has is to make the government behave. The fourth function is to make an alternative government.

One of the tragedies of the federal election we just had is that we've got a Parliament that has no alternative government and it is not possible to imagine an alternative government in that Parliament. It's hard to imagine an election soon that would create a rather different Parliament that would still fix that problem, and that's a very serious problem for the nation. For two successive general elections we've got Parliaments that could not, in that mix, meet that fourth function that Professor Franks observes, namely, making an alternative government. Preston Manning and Gilles Duceppe an alternative government? They only agree on one thing, Duceppe and Manning, and that is that Quebec should go. You can't meet that responsibility in that respect.

I want to come back, though, to the point I was getting at earlier, that we have some responsibilities as members of Parliament. We've been losing our way over the last number of years. I think the time has come to really reflect upon this, because whether you're Ned Franks or Norman Ward or J.R. Mallory, most of the people who've observed the Canadian political culture conclude, among other things, that one of the most dominant and remarkable features of the Canadian political culture and the Canadian parliamentary culture is just how incredibly dominant cabinets have become and how correspondingly weak Parliaments have become. And that's irrespective of party, I might quickly add.

Franks has some particularly interesting advice that is counterintuitive; it's not what people would expect. He also makes a point in this book, and I want to just cite it. He says, "Procedure, like most aspects of Parliament, is about power: who has it, who wields it and how it's applied," page 116 of the text, I think. So don't be misled, folks. This is not just an arcane debate about this little piece and that little piece. This is about a fundamental question of power and the balance of power. We should think about that.

This government, like any government, has a right to be upset by some of the behaviour. Bradley was right. I think he was the one who — bell-ringing is Fascistic. The fact that a finance minister couldn't present a budget to the place is just — we all lose in that. But I was once a government House leader and made some mistakes, some of them considered and some of them totally inadvertent. Bradley's right. I know that this place is only going to work if there is a reasonable level of consensus, accepting that it is a fundamentally adversarial place.

I love these people. I won't say anything about the Integrity Commissioner today, because how could I? But there are days when I think: "My goodness, I like these — oh, it's just Parliament. It's just so noisy and they're so negative and they slang one another." Then

there's always somebody who comes along and says, "It used to be so antiseptic and so wonderful." It really was, was it?

Peter Waite is a noted Canadian historian. He's written a fabulous essay, in a book called *Oliver Mowat's Ontario*, called *Reflections on an Un-Victorian Society*. There's some wonderful stuff about the Parliament of Canada in the 1870s and 1880s. I wouldn't even want Mrs Marland's delicate Mississauga ears to hear some of that. She would be stupefied. There wouldn't be another Girl Guide or Boy Scout who felt a democratic impulse in his or her being if they were ever to find out what Macdonald and — oh, not just Macdonald. It was indelicate, to say the least.

Folks, this is a system that is adversarial. This place is a substitute for the battlefield. When those western Canadians went to the Speaker's foot 17 years ago — remember that, that fight over the national energy program? There were some pretty responsible people. Those western Canadian Tories were enraged by Trudeau's national energy program, and their rage drove them to some actions that I'm sure they didn't want to do and are not now proud of. You were talking there about not just selling Girl Guide cookies or not just deciding what kind of avian emblem Ontario would have or what kind of colour we would put on the carpet downstairs. You were talking about issues that were fundamental, about the economic development of the country, about regional pressures in a country that's highly regionalized. So let us not expect that we're going to have a very neat little debating society.

2220

Having said that, Judge Evans, Mr Hastings and others are right to observe that the decorum is too often wanting these days. I think it was Mr Bradley who observed, perhaps even the Premier, when I heard the radio reports, coming back from my prayer meeting with Mr Nixon under those maple trees in Grimsby this afternoon, that antics seem to attract a lot of attention. I can't imagine anybody who would be more expert at knowing that than Michael D. Harris, Esq, of North Bay.

Why I will support the Wood motion is that I think this set of proposals is too favourable to the executive branch of government, that there is not the corresponding redress for Parliament, that the speaking times are somewhat restrictive. But I conclude by saying that the quality of the speeches and our whole attitude and mindset to the importance of Parliament as Parliament and our roles as free-thinking, relatively independent members of Parliament is a more fundamental question with which we are all going to have to deal.

**Ms Martel:** I'm going to begin by saying that I always enjoy listening to the member for Renfrew North, because he has been in this chamber for some long time now and can speak to experiences because of that long time in this chamber that many of us don't know or have not been accustomed to or have had no attachment to, even though the former member for Sudbury East spent a lot of time in this House and would have listened to Mr Nixon for some long time too and was also a House leader at the same time that he was. Having said that, I must also admit that I never like having to follow, in speaking, the member for Renfrew North, because of that



very reason, because of his experience and what he can add to the debate.

But there are some things I want to say about the issue we are engaged in discussing here this evening. I think it's a very important debate and one that I feel very strongly about. We are dealing with an amendment put forward by the member for Cochrane North to make two changes: first, to change what the government has proposed with respect to the limits on individual debates by members in this House; and second, we are trying to change the government proposal that if this assembly sits beyond 6 at night to whatever time at night — 9:30 I believe is what is in the government motion — the government can count that as two sessional days. Of course that would be very helpful when the government is trying to force closure on any number of debates.

I have to tell you that the government motion as proposed and the reasons for our trying to amend what is a very bad and negative motion have to do with our sense and our perception that the bottom line with respect to the government's motion is that the government wants to use the rule changes to avoid public scrutiny of the government's agenda, to avoid liability of the government's agenda, and to avoid accountability for the negative impacts of the government's agenda. For our caucus, and for me, that's what's at the heart of our debating this motion, of us moving the amendments and of us trying to impress upon the government, particularly the back bench, that whatever rule changes you bring forward, we can guarantee that this place will not be more effective and that you will not get your agenda through any faster, even though you desperately want to.

At the end of the day what will happen is that it will become much more difficult for this place to operate, period, because when opposition members feel like the government is ramming its agenda down their throats and down the throats of the public, there will be a reaction from the opposition. The reaction will be us doing whatever it takes, whatever we can do to ensure that our voice and the voice of the people we represent is heard.

The government can try to ram through these changes. The government will vote down our amendments and any the official opposition might put forward, but in ramming through these rule changes, which are extremely draconian, I might add, this place will not operate any better, there will be no increased trust among House leaders and there will be great difficulty around this government trying to get unanimous consent for whatever it wants to. All in all, this place will not function one whit better or more effectively on behalf of all the people I thought all of us were here trying to represent.

I listened earlier to the comments of a couple of the government members. I really have to respond to a couple of things that were said, particularly by the member for Mississauga South. I was upstairs, after having finished being involved in the public hearings — I use that term loosely; I'll speak to the public hearings about Bill 99 later on — watching the member for Mississauga South on TV speak to this amendment. I hate to use the word "sanctimonious," but it's the only word I can use to describe what I felt about that presentation.

One of the first things she said which struck me was that if you can't say your piece in this assembly in 20

minutes, there's something wrong; if you can't represent the views of your constituents on a piece of legislation in this place in 20 minutes, there's something dreadfully wrong. Then I noted with some amusement that she went on and spoke for the full 30 minutes she was allotted for this debate. I thought, tit for tat, what did that have to do with anything? What kind of comment was she making? What kind of addition did she make to this debate when the same member who stood for a number of minutes on her feet and argued that if you can't say it in 20 minutes, don't say it at all or there's something wrong, then proceeded to use her full 30 minutes?

During her remarks the member also made a great deal of comment about how the place is falling apart, how members are showing disrespect or have a lack of respect for this place, how awful it must be for folks who tune in — I think she said in the morning — to this place on TV when, for example, during the Bill 26 filibuster they saw the leader of the third party, our leader, asleep.

I was reminded that this was the same member who, on more than one occasion when I came into this place during the filibuster on Bill 103, was asleep at her desk, with her head on her desk. On more than one occasion, the member for Mississauga South was in this chamber during the prolonged debate, the extensive debate on Bill 103 with her head down on her desk, asleep, but she neglected to mention that during her comments. I would think that people who are appalled at seeing the leader of the third party asleep during the debate on Bill 26 would have been just as appalled to see the member for Mississauga South asleep at her desk during the megacity debate. I thought: "What a contradiction. Why did she forget to mention that?"

If she's concerned about people in this chamber not having respect or adequate respect or appropriate respect, she had better not look that much further than herself, particularly with respect to the example she raised. I thought it was a silly example in any event, given that we were all here all night. I think the public doesn't worry too much about those things, because the public is far more worried about how this government is gutting any number of pieces of legislation and beating up on the poorest of the poor. I thought it was really strange that she would use that kind of example when she herself had been part and parcel of the so-called or alleged problem.

2230

The other thing I was interested in, when she talked about people being concerned about respect and showing respect for the democratic institution and what people were doing or were not doing in this place, this was the same member, as I recall, who was filmed by the TV cameras in this place looking through swatches. Do you remember, Madam Speaker? She had a big book on her desk, in the middle of a debate that was going on, flipping through page after page of swatches, which we came to find out were swatches for the chairs in the government caucus room. What does that say to people who are watching this place? What does that make people think about how much they're paying their politicians and whether they are getting their money's worth?

I just think the member needs to be awful careful about shutting up opposition members in the sense of



saying that we are the ones responsible here for the bad public image that people have of all politicians because of our conduct when there have been any number of us — and I am as much party to that as anyone else in here — involved in conduct that at the end of the day probably did add to public cynicism. I say to the member, she needs to be awful careful about just talking about the conduct of opposition members, because we have all had and all participated in our share of increasing, not decreasing, public cynicism about the democratic process in this place. That's a fair thing to say.

The other thing the member said —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd):** Member for Huron, member for Algoma, member for Halton North, please. This is a discussion about decorum. I would call upon you to listen carefully to the debate.

**Ms Martel:** I look forward to the member for Huron participating in the debate when it next goes in rotation to her party. In any event, I listened further to the member — and this was repeated by another of the Conservative members tonight — about how appalled they were about what happened with Mr Curling, who is in the chamber tonight, and how awful that was, what a breach of the democratic process that incident demonstrated etc.

I thought to myself, if only this group had been as concerned with respect to what their own government House leader was trying to ram through the House at the same time. If only this group, who were so supposedly appalled by what was done by the member for Scarborough North, had been as worried about the fact that the government, on its own, was trying to ram through an omnibus bill in this place without any public input, without any public consultation, before Christmas, in about a 10-day period. If they had been as worried, then maybe we wouldn't have had to find ourselves in the position that we did and maybe Mr Curling would not have had to take the action that he did, which, yes, was supported by members of the opposition.

I can tell you I was proud to support him in that, because I felt then, and I feel just as strongly today, that the government's only intention with respect to that bill was to shove it down people's throats as quickly as they could, as far as they could, without any public scrutiny, without any accountability, without any public input. The government here has to realize that they were not elected by the majority of people in this province, even though how the system works means that they have a majority of seats. They were not elected by the majority of people in this province, and people in this province and their elected MPPs from the opposition have a right and have an obligation to make the point, to be critical, to criticize, to hold the government accountable.

The member for Mississauga South and her other colleague from Etobicoke who spoke here tonight need to start to understand that when you use tactics that reflect a dictatorship, then you are going to have the opposition respond. The opposition will respond in any way they think they can to that kind of an abuse of process and an abuse of this place. What the government did on Bill 26 was exactly that. They abused their majority; they abused

this assembly; they abused the opposition and the public, all of whom had a right to have some input into a bill that fundamentally changed the health care system in this province, municipalities in this province, pay equity in this province and any number of other dramatic changes that were part and parcel of that omnibus bill.

The rule changes as they have been put forward by the government really have as their purpose to shut down and shut out the public from any scrutiny of this government's agenda. That is the bottom line. That is why we are opposed to them and that is why we are trying, through these amendments, to make some changes to what are very draconian initiatives on the part of this government.

The government in putting forward the rule changes that it has, in the unilateral fashion that it did under the cover of the federal election, and then the amendments put forward under cover of a funeral, for goodness' sake, have at their heart the desire for this government to ram through its legislation, especially controversial pieces of it, as quickly as possible without accountability or scrutiny. These rule changes follow very clearly a pattern that was set by this Conservative government on the day it arrived in office in this place.

Take a look at how the government has approached any number of issues.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, speaker. I'm wondering if there's a quorum present. Could you check?

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you check for a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sudbury East may continue.

**Ms Martel:** The rule changes follow a pattern which this government established when it arrived here. If you take a look at what this government has done with respect to consultation on government bills, with respect to consultation on government discussion papers, with respect to public hearings processes around here, it becomes very clear that every action taken by the government with respect to those things has been as much as possible to shut down those processes, to shut out those people who might come forward and have an opposing point of view, to shut out the ability of the public to come forward and provide solutions which are different than the ones the government wants to impose.

Take a look, for example, at the consultation that has occurred on some of the bills. I use the word "consultation" loosely, because in many cases there wasn't any, or the consultation that occurred on major pieces of legislation that fundamentally changed structures and legislation in this province was only done in concert with the government's friends, behind closed doors, in the back rooms of this place.

2240

Bill 7, for example, fundamentally changed the relationship in the workplace between employers and workers and took workers' rights back 50 years in this province. There was no consultation with organized labour with respect to that. Organized labour is a party to the workplace. There are two, employers and workers, yet organ-



ized labour, workers in this province, had no input with respect to the dramatic changes that were introduced by the Minister of Labour which turned back the clock in this province 50 years with respect to the gains workers had fought for and won.

Take a look at Bill 103, the megacity legislation. The Minister of Municipal Affairs tried to say his legislation was incorporating recommendations that had been made by any number of people who had been asked to study amalgamation, not only of public services but of municipalities. The fact of the matter was that everything the government did was contrary to any of the studies that had been put forward which recommended consolidation in the GTA. The government had no consultation with anyone and the studies it relied on frankly were studies that recommended a completely different approach and a different way to deal with that particular issue.

Look at Bill 26. What kind of consultation took place with people who were most affected? What kind of consultation took place, for example, with firefighters, with police officers, with people who work in the health care system who are now being impacted by decisions of the Health Services Restructuring Commission? There was no consultation with people who were and continue to be so dramatically affected by the changes the government has imposed, and that's typical of how this government operates with respect to bills it brings forward.

Look at the public hearings process that goes on around this place. Bill 7: No public hearings on a bill which fundamentally changed the relationship between workers and employers in the workplace; not one second of public consultation on a bill of that magnitude. The bills that changed the Public Libraries Act: One single day of public hearings here in Toronto, despite the many groups who applied for standing, who wanted to talk to the government about the importance of public libraries, who wanted to have their say. A single day of public hearings in Toronto, that's what we got, for the people in Toronto who wanted to have their say.

We were dealing with Bill 99 this afternoon in committee, and that's another farce. That's another blatant attempt by this government to shut out the public, particularly injured workers who have the most to lose by the terrible changes this Minister of Labour is bringing in through that bill. We have the potential of 130 out of over 1,300 people who requested standing, even before the public hearings started, who may be heard at the end of the day. Yet the bill as proposed by the minister dramatically, negatively impacts upon the lives of hundreds and hundreds of workers hurt now and hundreds and thousands who will be hurt in the future, and their families and their ability to sustain their families.

The government has consistently voted down motions our party has put forward to extend the hearings and to ensure that injured workers have a single day in Toronto where they can come and express their concerns directly to the committee. Every time that committee has sat, the government has voted that motion down, because this Conservative government does not want to hear from the public, does not want to hear from injured workers, does not want people to have any say, does not want their legislation to go through public scrutiny and does not

want to be accountable for the dramatic and very detrimental and devastating changes they are making through this bill.

The government goes further because the government then passes legislation to protect itself from liability, again not to be accountable, not to have to deal with the fallout that comes from some of their legislative changes, from some of their agenda.

I look at Bill 26 and see that the Health Services Restructuring Commission is protected from all liability and cannot be sued. If the government was confident in its legislation, if the government was not worried about the effects the restructuring commission is going to have on community after community in this province, then why does the government have a clause in the legislation that protects the commission from all liability?

Why did the government do the same thing in Bill 57, for example, changes to the environment, where companies no longer have to get a certificate of approval to operate in the province? The government will set a framework or a standard for various classes, and as long as you meet the particular standard, you don't have to get a certificate of approval. In that legislation too the government passed an amendment which protects the government from all liability if there is a spill, if there is an environmental disaster, because this government decided that companies didn't have to have certificates of approval any more and people didn't have to have any kind of input into the factories, into the shops and into the operations that were going into their neighbourhoods.

Why does the government do that? To avoid accountability, to avoid public scrutiny. If you thought the bill was so good, if you thought it was so right, why do you put in an amendment to try and protect yourself from someone suing you? What kind of perception do you think that raises with people out there who see that kind of thing? What do they think when they see their government passing legislation that protects the government itself from liability for the changes it's making? I don't think it looks very good to the majority of people out there who watch the changes that are taking place.

The government rationale, the real rationale for the rule changes I think was best expressed in this place by the member for Dufferin-Peel. I've heard the government try and tell this House that they're concerned about the ability of members to participate and that some of these rule changes will allow for increased participation. I've heard some of the government members refer to the changes that will benefit the independent member, as if somehow they're so terribly concerned about the rights of the independent member.

But the member for Dufferin-Peel, in his remarks on the amendments put forward by the minister for privatization, hit it right on the head. He said: "We're doing this because the government should not be stopped in getting its agenda through. The government cannot be stopped. The government has a right to govern." Do you know what was interesting? When we said to him, "Name one government bill that this Conservative government hasn't been able to get through in the time it's been here," the member for Dufferin-Peel couldn't answer.

Then the member for Nepean, who has been the front person for these rule changes, got up and said that the



government bill that hadn't gone through, that hadn't been passed, was Bill 33. I have a copy of Bill 33, put forward by Mr Flaherty, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act. It was a private member's bill that was put forward by Mr Flaherty. This is not a government bill, I say to the member for Nepean, unless the government is going to start ensuring that all the government members who participate in private members' hour now bring forward the agenda of the government. This was a private member's bill.

I heard the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale talk about private members' hour earlier and how important private members' hour was because it allowed people to drop their party hats. That's what I heard him say. Yet the member for Nepean uses this, a private member's bill, as the example of the government not being able to get its agenda through. What you said was just not factually correct, my friend. There has been no government bill, not a single government bill that has not been passed through this Legislature by the government using its majority. Not one has been blocked. So the argument the member for Dufferin-Peel uses and the government uses and the member for Nepean tried to use is a false one. The government, with its majority, always gets its legislation through. That was the case when I was here in opposition from 1987 to 1990, it was the case when I was here in government, and it is the case now. The government, at the end of the day, always gets its legislation through because it has a majority to do so.

2250

It is a fallacy for the members of the government to say, "We need this because we can't get our agenda through." What is at the heart of this is that the government wants to ram through its legislation as quickly as it can whenever it wants to. That's what's at the heart of the rule changes.

People in this place on the government side think that because they were elected and have a majority, somehow they represent the views of all the people in the province. I remind the government members that the group of us who are over here were elected by the majority of the people in the province. That's the reality. We have, as opposition members, a right, but more importantly an obligation, to represent in this House a different point of view. We were elected to do that.

The people who elected us didn't buy into your revolution, didn't buy into your agenda. The majority of people in this province didn't buy into your agenda or your revolution. Those people have a right to expect that the MPPs they elected who sit on the opposition side will be able to come to this place and have their say and represent their views and represent their concerns and represent a different vision for Ontario than the one you folks reflect. That's what the people who elected us expect us to do and that's what we are trying to do. Your rule changes are a blatant attempt to try and stop us from doing that. When you do that, you affect not only us but the people we come here to represent, the people who have a different vision, a different point of view, who want something different for their kids and their family in Ontario than the agenda you're trying to put forward.

We have moved these amendments, even though we believe the whole package is terribly flawed, because

what we are trying to do through our amendments it to ensure that opposition members continue to have an important role in the democratic process in this place and that we continue to represent the views of the public who sent us here and on whose behalf we are now here to serve.

**Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex):** It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to add a few comments to the discussion this evening. I have to say I think it would be very easy to approach it from a cynical perspective. From my perspective, I would like to approach it from a more positive viewpoint than perhaps has been articulated this evening.

I'd also like to recognize the member for Nepean and the efforts he has made to bring forward this matter. Anyone who knows the member for Nepean will know him as an extremely focused individual when he addresses a particular issue. This is an issue that he has felt strongly about as an individual, and one he has brought forward in his capacity as parliamentary assistant to the House leader. I know he has devoted a great deal of time and consideration to this matter, one that has been spoken to from different perspectives this evening and one that has brought different viewpoints, both in terms of immediate observations and others based on a more historical perspective.

As I mentioned at the outset, it's easy, as a new member, to be somewhat cynical. We all come to this place with expectations that we are going to make a difference. I think that's a reasonable expectation, an expectation that need not be lost in some of the traditions of this place, but at the same time it's an expectation that needs to be addressed in the context of how we can make this place work better in the future.

One of the observations I made right from the outset — the member for Algoma alluded to this a little earlier this evening — centres on our committee system in general. Any new member, any backbencher who comes to this place quickly becomes a journeyman of this place through the committee process, and it's a process I've had the pleasure of experiencing extensively over the course of the last two years. From that perspective, we look at opportunities to improve it.

I myself do not necessarily support the methods by which people are brought to a committee, how we arrive at determining which individuals shall appear, the ability with which we deal with those individuals. I have to reflect on last night, as we dealt with matters the member for Essex-Kent brought forward from a private member's perspective, as well as my colleague from St Catharines-Brock; the method we had to go through to deal with those individual interests outside the formal committee process, one which extended the debate much longer than it perhaps needed to be. That experience, as well as many other experiences we see on a regular basis, speaks to the reason we need to move forward and address some changes in this place.

I was deeply interested in the comments of the member for Renfrew North this evening. I think all members were interested in the comments he made and the response they provided him. I too would have to say it's been my observation that personal interests, political interests,



seem to be the primary motivation in this place, versus merit and content of discussion. His comments in terms of the quality of speech spoke very loudly to the efforts that each one of us needs to make as we address issues of importance, both as government and opposition members.

This is not an attack, in my opinion, on the rights of members. It's an issue of opportunity for increased accountability and doing things differently in this place.

I found it interesting that the member for Algoma suggested that no one listens. We don't necessarily agree with viewpoints, but I can say — and the member for London Centre will know the slippery slope I travelled down one day when I recognized the practical advice she provided to me as a new member to this place, the criticism that resulted from that. Having spent some time in committee with the member for Algoma, I have listened and I have learned from his experience. I don't necessarily agree with his viewpoint. I think he should not lose sight of the fact that perhaps that learning experience is being provided, that we are listening. It's articulated in different formats, and not always in terms of how it's presented in this place.

The member for Halton Centre tonight talked about his experience, and I think he provided some very practical observations of his experience here. It combined a bit of cynicism, I would suggest, a bit of jest, realism and perhaps some true observation of how this place operates. As I said at the outset, I don't wish to be critical of that process, but at the same time, I think there is opportunity to improve upon how we do things here.

It has been my practice from the outset to approach this from one of listening and learning and then attempting to apply what I've learned. The first two have come easily. The third, in terms of applying, I'm not sure has come that easily, either by inability to apply it or perhaps, from a different perspective, not wanting to apply what I've learned. Having said that, I'm far more optimistic that that third point of view will be remedied in the longer term, as I experience more opportunities here. I fully anticipate that all three of those applications I attempt to bring to this job are met at some time in my political career.

As I mentioned, the member for Halton Centre raised some important points, ones I agree with. An interesting part as well, tonight, was that the member for Algoma-Manitoulin described this place as being dysfunctional. That speaks in part to why we need to have some changes here, to remedy the dysfunction we do experience from time to time — not necessarily every day. It presents itself in different formats. But that dysfunctional observation he's made needs to be addressed.

The member for Algoma referred to the process of tightening the rules. His experience here of some 22 years would lead him to believe that the tighter the rules are, the more bizarre the tactics will become. That's perhaps a reasonable observation, and I suspect the members of the opposition will endeavour to meet that challenge. I have no false expectations in that regard.

2300

But there's some irony in his comments tonight, because there's a lot that needs to be done between

House leaders in terms of operations and how we come to agreement on various issues. But to come to the conclusion that we would pursue more bizarre tactics in terms of the rules we're dealing with I think speaks to a larger problem that we have before us.

The issue of changes to the House is one that is important. It's not new to this place. We saw changes in 1989; we saw changes in 1991; we saw changes in 1992. I'm not going to question the motivation for those changes. The member for Renfrew North, when he made his comments, alluded to the fact that during his experience as House leader he made decisions in that capacity, both inadvertently and from a considered point of view. Having listened to him this evening, I suspect his decisions were more based on considered points of view and a reasonable approach than inadvertent.

None the less, we have to recognize that we are not stepping away from something or creating something that hasn't happened in this place before. The government House leader and my colleagues on the government side are proposing these changes in the same context that those changes were made previously. We're making them for the right reasons. We're making them for just reasons and, I believe, in the best interests of the Legislature and the House in terms of the business we do here.

Too often we spend time emphasizing a process or approach that suggests we are about to abuse a process. I certainly do not want to be a part of a process that's abusive. I come here to bring viewpoints on behalf of my constituents. They can be readily expressed in this place or through other avenues, all of which other members of the opposition parties avail themselves as well.

It's about a process of establishing a balance between rights of the members and how we can conduct and conclude the business of this House. Those are important points as we reflect on what have been some very relevant comments this evening in terms of what we're experiencing, what we hope to experience in this place, both from a partisan perspective and perhaps from a non-partisan perspective in terms of what we think should be outcomes with respect to any changes in standing orders.

I would simply conclude, because all the opposition members have been very gracious to outline to the government members that we're not walking the walk and speaking the talk with respect to the proposals in the standing order changes, by suggesting that these are important changes. They're important changes to the government, changes that I believe do not compromise the ability of opposition members to present their viewpoints. They will find a way to do that, both in this place and outside.

I again acknowledge the member for Nepean for his efforts in terms of trying to find amendments that protect the democratic rights of members of this Legislature, his efforts to find a process that leads to more efficiency and more productivity in this place, amendments that, by and large, bring us into line with rules that are in practice in the House of Commons in this country.

There will be much debate around the technical components. I suspect those technical challenges will be met by the opposition as they move forward to do what they have to do in presenting their viewpoints and representing their interests.



I would only say in conclusion that I'm very supportive of these measures. They move us in the right direction, a direction that is in the best interests of the Legislature and in the best interests of doing business on behalf of the taxpayers of this province.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaitre (Ottawa East):** A lot has been said over the last four or five days, and I feel obliged and compelled to add a few words to what has been said and maybe repeat what has been said.

The exercise we are going through at the present time is most important. I remember that when I was first elected to this House, I came here with a business background, a municipal background, went through 11 elections. I came here with a businessman's attitude. I wanted this government or the party that I belonged to, the Liberal Party, to be run as a business. I realized very shortly after my election that you cannot run a government the way you run a business. It's impossible. I learned this in the few short months after I was first elected.

Fortunately enough, I was only in the opposition for five months; then I was appointed minister. Then it was another circle of business people, not the type who deal with great big deals, but business people. They were looking after the business of the government.

I don't want to start fingering people and blaming people. I think we're all to blame, because the mood, the attitude of this chamber has changed tremendously in the last 12 years. I remember when TV was first introduced in this House. I'm not blaming TV, but I am blaming people who use TV. Because TV is in the House, it changed the mood and the attitude of too many politicians.

TV gives us a stage where we can openly criticize the government for the way they do business, the way this bill or this motion or the amendments were brought in on June 2, federal election day: a very secretive, very private press conference, and it was introduced. Bill 26 was introduced on budget day. Imagine. When everybody was trying to get back into this House, Bill 26 was being introduced. Bill 26 has to be the most — major change was brought in in this legislation, amending 47 provincial statutes.

No wonder people think that we're silly, people think we don't deserve to represent them. Yet they don't have much of a choice; we are the candidates. But no wonder people think we're cynical, because that's our attitude, that's our mood. We come here with frustration in our hearts, and the way to get rid of this frustration is to insult people.

We want the government to respect us for the simple reason that we have a responsibility: We have to represent our people. But I've noticed in the last five or maybe six or seven years that the way some people think you gain respect is by insulting each other. This is not the way to do business. I don't care what kind of business you're in; you don't insult customers. You don't insult clients. You can consult them, you can talk to them, you can find their needs. This is what we're supposed to be doing. We're supposed to know the needs of our constituents and we are supposed to be their voice in this place.

It doesn't necessarily happen that way. We may not like the way this government operates, and I think this government has a responsibility not only to change the rules but to look at the attitude and the moods in this House. I think if the government — the previous government did it and we did it when we were in power, we amended the rules. I don't think we did a great job and I don't think the present government did a great job for the simple reason that no consultation was done.

**2310**

We had this element of surprise: "Let's surprise the opposition." I stand this evening to tell the government that, surprise or no surprise, they will not put us aside. The opposition is needed; it is part of our democracy. We all say that we respect democracy, that we practise democracy, and I don't think we do. Every day we hear the word "democracy," but democracy is put aside to satisfy the government's agenda — and again, I'm not pointing fingers; we did the same thing — to satisfy the government agenda.

When I first read the Common Sense Revolution, personally I said: "It's impossible. These people cannot use this commonsense approach" — they think it's a commonsense approach — "and do it in five years." Well, I'm mistaken, because at the present time, this government is determined to go through page 1 to page 28, if I'm not mistaken, of the Common Sense Revolution and introduce all of this legislation.

What's happening is that in the first two years of this government, most of their legislation of the Common Sense Revolution is before us, and we know, people know, that the next two years will be some kind of a honeymoon. They'll be reinvesting those major budget cuts that they've made and they'll fine-tune their programs, fine-tune their legislation. People are not crazy, people are not stupid, and if we think they are, we have a major surprise for us, for all of us, as politicians.

I think we need to express our constituents' thoughts and voices. I know we feel frustrated but we have to put this frustration aside. The UN has said that Canada is the greatest country to live in, and I think Ontario is the best province to live in. But it is our responsibility to make Ontario even better, and when I say even better, I mean for everybody. At the present time I don't think the government is including everybody; it's not everybody that's on the bandwagon.

Mike Harris has an agenda, and he was duly elected as a majority government, has responsibilities, and he wants to drive that agenda. It's his agenda and it's his business, but it's the way he's doing business, the way that legislation is being approved, the way people are being put aside.

When I go back home every weekend, I meet people telling me, "This government is doing the right thing." But the following week they say: "Hey, this government is going too fast. It's now affecting me. It's affecting my mom, my dad, my cousin, my aunt; it's affecting people. They're on the right track, but they're going too fast." Now they want to speed up the train. They want that train to get to the station not in two and a half years from now, not in two years from now, they want it in by August 18, which is when we'll be back in the House.



Why? Because they want to pursue their Common Sense Revolution, and it's their business, it's their agenda. But I'm warning you, I'm telling you, I'm pleading with you, take a look around you, and I don't know about your ridings, but I'm sure when you go back home, people don't phone you to congratulate you and say, "Hey, what a great job you're doing." I'm sure you must be concerned about people that are left by the wayside; I'm sure of this.

I don't know how well you're listened to in caucus or in cabinet, but there is a difference between caucus and cabinet. I've lived those differences, and I can tell you that in cabinet, as my colleague from Renfrew North said, when somebody tells you to jump, you say, "How high?" As a backbencher, only for five months maybe, I had this feeling that I was left aside. I was occupying a seat, I was representing 76,000 people, yet I didn't have a voice.

Now this government wants to change the rules because they think that the backbenchers, people who are not in cabinet, will have a better opportunity to express themselves and have better opportunity to debate. But I'm telling you, with these rules —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Nepean, if you're going to carry on a conversation in that loud tone, could you take it outside. I'm having a hard time hearing the member for Ottawa East.

**Mr Grandmaître:** I think it's about time we straighten out this young man — this young, ambitious man.

These rules will erode our effectiveness and will affect our democracy for the simple reason that backbenchers feel they're not part of the decision-making process and, by providing you with more opportunities, well, you feel that you will have more opportunities to have a say in this House. This will not improve the work of cabinet. You can have your say, but cabinet is a different animal than caucus, and caucus is a different animal from this House.

We voice our frustration for the simple reason that we feel left out. We feel left out, and we all say that we have to improve the quality of life in this House. If we mean this, if we are serious, we better start now. We better start with having some kind of a committee to look at the rules. We won't be able to satisfy everybody. It's impossible. But I think our main objective is to find a common denominator or close to a common denominator that will satisfy most of the people.

This is why we have filibusters — I'm not too proud of these filibusters, but they are needed at the present time because it's our only tool. It's the only tool we have to fight the government. I shouldn't use the words "fight the government" but to slow down the government and say: "Hey, you just left half a million people behind you. You're doing good with the business people, but the people who need social services, a better education and all of our great programs in the province, we're failing them, and we're failing them badly."

This government has an attitude that we are a business and we have to improve the quality of the services of our business and we will download some of our responsibilities, a good deal of our responsibilities, on to municipal government. I remember when I was in municipal government and Claude Bennett was the Minister of

Municipal Affairs, and thank God Claude was from Ottawa so I had a chance to talk to the minister maybe once a month. In those days when AMO would meet, and even today AMO is still asking for power. "We want more power."

2320

I can tell you, councillors and mayors, you're getting the power, but it's not a free ticket. There's a price to pay. Municipal taxpayers will pay that price because they are in need of those services. How many services will be privatized in the next two and a half years? I don't know, but there's a price to pay for this privatization because, I remind you again, we cannot operate this government as we operate a business. It doesn't work that way.

With the number of customers we have, close to 12 million people in Ontario, it's impossible to keep track of all of these people. This is why we have 130 voices in this House, to try to bring all of these voices into this House and make the government realize, "Hey, you're going too fast," or, "I can't keep up with your pace." Seniors can't keep up; young people without a job can't keep up with the pace of the government; people who are sick cannot keep up.

We have to realize that we cannot exclude these people if we want to be a successful province. Even if we are classified as the best country in the world, our task is not finished. We still have a great deal of work to do. I think it's a golden opportunity for us, who believe in democracy and who believe we can do a job, to put our heads together and say not only the opposition but to people in Ontario, "Hey, don't accept this kind of approach."

You know what? We will all gain by it. We will all be winners. It won't be, "This person is a Tory and this person is an NDP and that person is a Liberal." They will respect us for what we are trying to do. No wonder people don't respect politicians. No wonder school children don't want to come to this place. For the simple reason of our conduct it shouldn't be on TV; that's number 1. Ask yourself, "If this House" — let's call it a program — "were on radio, how many people would listen to the radio?" Very few people. I can't even get a majority on the other side. But because it is on TV, people want to take advantage of it, and it's too bad. It's a very useful tool to communicate and for the government to use effectively to tell people what we're all trying to do.

I'm accused at times of talking like a Conservative and acting like an NDPer, but I don't mind this; in fact I accept it. Some thoughts could be a little to the right and some of my other thoughts on the left, but if I'm strong enough I'll come back to the centre. When I use the centre I don't say "Liberal," I'm not going to use the word "Liberal"; I say, "to the middle," where I can satisfy most of my people. You cannot satisfy all of the people, but I think we have to try much harder if we want to succeed. If we are serious about managing this chamber, managing this province, we have to be much more serious.

Je n'ai pas l'intention de répéter entièrement mon discours — je ne devrais pas appeler ça un discours — faire sortir ma frustration, frustration parce que le débat que nous avons depuis quatre ou cinq jours est inutile.



C'est inutile parce que nous sommes des têtus, 130 personnes qui sont têtues, qui ont la tête dure, qui ne veulent pas bouger. À gauche ou à droite on occupe un territoire et on ne veut que personne mette un pied sur notre territoire.

C'est malheureux, parce qu'on pense à notre famille de 130 personnes, mais on oublie 12 millions de personnes en Ontario. Nous avons été élus avec la responsabilité de faire valoir les idées, les pensées de nos commettants. Si on n'unit pas nos pensées, nos paroles et nos actions, la province de l'Ontario va en souffrir.

Là, les gens vont pouvoir nous accuser, nous pointer du doigt qu'on a failli à la tâche. Si on parle de la génération future, on doit se réveiller dès maintenant. Si on est vraiment sincère de donner la même opportunité à nos enfants que celle que nous avons eue tous, il va falloir changer notre attitude. Il va falloir mettre de côté nos frustrations.

La partisanerie, c'est sûr qu'on va toujours en avoir. La philosophie, on en a parlé. Ma philosophie : c'est bon, consulter les gens, connaître les nouvelles idées, et on peut changer d'idée. C'est en changeant d'attitude, en changeant d'idée que nous allons vraiment améliorer la qualité des débats en Chambre, et qu'on soit sincère entre chacun et chacune.

Si on n'aime pas ce que nos adversaires nous disent, il faut être assez honnête de le dire. Mais par contre, on n'a pas besoin d'attaquer une personne personnellement. Moi, je déteste attaquer une personne, parce que cette personne-là n'est pas vraiment la personne responsable. Surtout dans un gouvernement comme le nôtre, il y a un Cabinet qui fait des décisions. On a des gens, les «spin doctors», qui vont nous aider à faire des décisions. Mais il ne faut pas laisser ça à une dizaine ou à une quinzaine de personnes. Il ne faut pas laisser la dernière décision à 15 personnes. Il faut inclure les 130 personnes qui sont dans cette Chambre. Il faut inclure les gens qui sont derrière nous, les gens qui nous ont élus, les gens qui nous ont respectés. Si les gens dans mon comté m'ont respecté, moi j'espère que vous allez me respecter et, en retour, je vais vous respecter.

I will conclude by saying that I hope the government House leader will rethink his approach. I know a few amendments have been introduced, but those amendments don't really satisfy our needs. Again I'm going to suggest that the three House leaders meet and try to come to a conclusion, try to reason that what is before us is unacceptable. You'll be surprised: At the end of the day we won't be enemies, we'll be allies, because I think we're all serious about this. We're all responsible people. We all know that we want the best. I think the more ingredients we can add to this salad, the better the results will be. I'm asking the government, I'm asking Mr Johnson, the House leader, I'm asking the Premier, I'm asking all of these great brains on the front seat, I'm asking people who have been around this place for 20 years, like Norm Sterling, not that I don't believe in John Baird, but I'm telling you we need people who have been around for more than two or three years.

Mr Baird, the member for Nepean, has been sent to do a job and he's trying to do it, I must congratulate him, but at the same time I think that the young member for

Nepean will have to remember that we are part of the team. The opposition is part of your team, like it or not. We're going to use your bench, we're going to use your baseball bat and, who knows, you might hit a home run with us, but I'm telling you it won't be easy.

2330

I want to remind people of this House that it won't be easy to reach a compromise but we have to work at it. If we really believe that we can make a difference — and that's what we keep telling people, we can make a difference — show me your guts. Show me that you really mean that you want to make a difference.

I think tomorrow morning you should call an early meeting of the House leaders, and don't admit that you've made a mistake. I'm not asking you to say, "Hey we've committed a sin; we've made a mistake." I'm not asking you for this. I'm asking you to be reasonable. A government is supposed to be reasonable. You know what? It will pay off in the end.

You can have your Common Sense Revolution and people will appreciate you for what you're trying to do, but at the present time people don't appreciate your businesslike attitude and your controversial legislation. It's not going to work. You're not only punishing the opposition — you know we're only 50-some members in the opposition — but you're penalizing, you're affecting 12 million people in Ontario.

If you're so sincere about making Ontario the best province ever, better than the days of David Peterson, better than in the days of Bob Rae, show me. Show me that you really mean it, because what you people in this government are saying doesn't really reflect your actions. When you read the Common Sense Revolution, then the way you're introducing legislation changes in the House doesn't reflect what I'm reading in the Common Sense Revolution. You're doing something else. You're ramming it through and you couldn't care less.

Gordie Howe played hockey for 30-some years, I guess 35 years, and he was well renowned for his elbows, but there comes a day that you've got to put your elbows to your side and say, "I can no longer afford to do this." Gordie Howe learned a lesson, being the greatest hockey player who ever lived. I want you to put your elbows down. Don't raise your elbows, because every time you raise your elbows you're affecting people and people are important to all of us in this House. If you don't realize this, we will all be a sorry bunch. I'm asking you to please think twice about introducing those amendments.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Here we are, it's 11:30 pm on Wednesday, June 25 —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** Well, because a whole lot of folks who watch this think they're watching the reruns. I suppose if people are watching this on cable 10 or on channel 53 — no, it's not Rogers cable any more down in Niagara. I haven't got the name down yet. I don't know what happened there. But the folks are watching it. Leno is on channel 2 and you can pick up David Letterman on channels 4 and 5 down in Niagara right now. If you've got a number return button you can watch both channels simultaneously. When Leno goes to commercial, come back to cable 53 because we'll be here for the next 30 minutes for sure.



**Mr Bradley:** Cable 15 in St Catharines.

**Mr Kormos:** Cable 15 in St Catharines, the member for St Catharines points out. I've got to tell you I didn't expect to be speaking, and I'm sorry I don't have my jacket. There's a woman who tore a strip off me around three months ago, a wonderful woman who liked what she had seen on the cable show. She approached me at an event up in Thorold during the spring months. She liked what she had seen on the legislative channel but she chastised me, she tore a strip off me for not wearing a tie all the time. So here I am and I'm not even wearing my jacket.

It ends up that she lives in Manchester, England, and she was visiting Peter and Melva Snowling in Thorold for a month and a half during the spring. Manchester, England, there you go. I told her, and I wore a tie the next time I was in the House, I would wear a tie on one occasion for her and her alone.

A couple of things are remarkable about what's been happening here: The line that's being used by the government backbenchers is that this rule change, the set of rule changes reducing debate to 20 minutes and then down to 10 minutes as the participants increase, is going to facilitate more participation in the debate, but what's remarkable is that for the first time in a long time Tory backbenchers have been engaging in the debate, speaking as often as not for periods of 30 minutes.

That suggests something to me. It suggests that the rule changes are about providing access for more Tory backbenchers, because it seems that a huge number of Tory backbenchers have been participating in this debate, in contrast to the Tory backbenchers who either decline — and I understand what happens. The House leader/whip says, "Sit this one out." We've seen it afternoon after afternoon. An afternoon is set aside for debate on, let's say, an opposition day. It happened the very last opposition day. The time is split three ways and the Tory backbenchers are told to sit it out: "Don't participate in the debate." They're told that. I understand that. We all understand that.

They've just abandoned, by virtue of following those kinds of marching orders, the right — Ms Martel talked about the obligation — to participate in debate. I find it strange that there was a defence fellow up in the corner from a riding down in the Oakville area, Halton Centre, who made reference to the Gettysburg address and its brevity and then of course it was elaborated on and fleshed out a little bit by the member for Renfrew.

The argument by the Tories in this regard is that 10 minutes will suffice, but few of them have been satisfied with a mere 10 minutes or even 20. As I've watched and listened to more than a couple of them as they've gotten wound up and on a roll and had to be shut down at the end of 30, it seemed that more than a few of them were wishing for at least five or 10 more minutes themselves, having a few thoughts they might have wanted to complete.

I had an interesting opportunity last Sunday, because we had the Rose Festival parade in Welland on Sunday. It started up at the Canadian Tire Acceptance up on Prince Charles Drive and travelled down across the canal and then down south to the arena, as it does every year.

A good chunk of Wellanders and visitors to the city were lining the streets. I'd say there were a good 10,000 or 12,000 or 15,000 people lining the streets.

2340

**Mr Bradley:** You were walking.

**Mr Kormos:** I was walking; I didn't ride the car. Mel Swart never rode the car, and I haven't for 10 years now. At some points during the parade road, as the sun's beating down on me and I'm sweating and it's getting hot and the feet are swelling, I wish I hadn't adopted Mel's standard of walking instead of riding. But the car was there. David Chev-Olds once again provided the car. That's the Chev dealership up on Niagara Street, unionized, CAW workers in the shop. I appreciate David Chev-Olds for providing the car again this year and I'm grateful to them. They're good community members, they're responsible corporate citizens and I entrust them with any auto repair work. I trust their shop completely. Cathy Robertson is a salesperson for David Chev-Olds. She once again drove the car in the parade.

One of the opportunities in walking that parade, as compared to merely riding it, is it gives you a chance to talk to the folks who are lined up on either side of the street. As I say, there have to be 10,000 or maybe 15,000 people by the end of the day. You don't get to talk to every one, but you get to talk to a whole chunk of them. One of the persistent comments, beginning up on Prince Charles Drive North by the Canadian Tire Acceptance, to the end, down on King Street at the arena, was concern about a government that seems to be moving along at full speed without any concern for the damage they're leaving in their wake.

That was a persistent theme, and the comments I got from people Sunday past, June 22, down in Welland —

**Mr Bradley:** Even the people who support them.

**Mr Kormos:** — as has been pointed out; even from people I know — I know not everybody in Thorold voted for any one of the three candidates. That's clear; that's obvious. I know there are a whole lot of people there who didn't vote for me, who voted for Conservative and Liberal candidates. I understand that. You've got to be from another planet not to understand that. I know who these folks are. They're not hesitant about telling me who they are. I've been blessed with that kind of relationship with the people in my communities, down in Welland-Thorold.

Even folks who I know haven't supported my campaign, and yes, who voted Conservative in 1995 — because a whole lot of people did; let's not kid ourselves. They had an expectation level, just as I know they had an expectation level in 1990 when they voted for New Democrats. People did, just like they had a huge expectation level when they voted for the Liberals in 1987, in a sweep that resulted in even more Liberals in this Legislature than there are Conservatives today. We can look at the history of those respective governments, be they Liberal or NDP after them, 1987 to 1990, 1990 to 1995.

Even people I know to be supportive of one or another or a combination of some of the things this government has as its goal, things that I've got to tell you I'm not in agreement with, have expressed concern about the government's reluctance, inability, failure to understand

that this is, as my colleague from the Conservative caucus — firstly, I suppose, my colleague from down in Oakville from the Tory benches, Gary Carr, who said that Mike Harris has got to realize this is still a democracy, not a dictatorship.

There are a whole lot of people out there who understand full well what the opposition has achieved over the course of the last two years with a great deal of difficulty, having to become increasingly, let's say, creative. I think we've been pretty blunt. Everybody has been pretty blunt talking about the fact that yes, from time to time the opposition has to engage in stunts. People have been very blunt about that, far more frank and responding with greater candour than the government members do about the actions they've been taking. People in Ontario have a far better understanding of the balance that's created by the presence of a meaningful and effective opposition than the members of this government.

They want to debate? Good, let's debate. Let's debate the report from the Integrity Commissioner that was tabled today regarding the conduct of Al Leach. The opposition members, both caucuses, spent a considerable amount of time today prevailing upon this government to consent to a debate, as is mandated, required, under provincial legislation, under the Members' Integrity Act of 1994. You heard it. More than a couple of hours today were spent trying to persuade the House leader of the Tory government to do precisely what these backbenchers insist they're eager to do now, and to do it in compliance with our requirements as an assembly under that piece of legislation.

We had tabled with this House a report that is most damning of one of our members — I will speak non-partisanly for a moment — one of the members of this assembly. Judge Evans, who is the commissioner for the Office of the Integrity Commissioner, described the Minister of Housing's conduct as "a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention" — not a mere misstep, not a mere sin of omission.

Judge Evans is experienced. He's been a lawyer and a judge in this province for a long time. I've known of him and his reputation for a long time and I tell you he's highly regarded as a former member of our Supreme Court in this province. He neither minces words nor does he paint the lily. He knows how important words are when you use them in the sort of report he prepared today, just as he did when he prepared judgements during the course of trials and other of his courtroom work.

Understand that this was an inquiry conducted by the judge in response to a complaint, an inquiry wherein the minister, Al Leach, had an opportunity and in fact did reply to the concerns raised. After assessing all the evidence, including the defence raised by Minister Leach, the Minister of Housing, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the sponsor of — do you remember Bill 26? Judge Evans found that it was "a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention."

He goes on to say, "Al Leach contravened the Members' Integrity Act by communicating with the chair of the Health Services Restructuring Commission." This isn't an equivocal finding, nor is it a finding by anybody less than one of the most responsible people in this province.

Anybody who has read the Members' Integrity Act knows that the commissioner, Judge Evans, has some very limited but precise powers that permit him to respond to a breach or a violation of the act summarily. It's a strange beast and it's a very powerful tool. We're not talking about somebody who has undergone, let's say, a trial by virtue of contravening the act, but somebody who has undergone an investigation by the commissioner; akin to a trial, no two ways about it, but not the same process. The commissioner can determine that the member's seat — we're talking about any MPP, because the minister here who has been found to be in violation, to have committed a flagrant breach of the members' integrity legislation, could have been asked to — well, not asked, but could have had his seat declared vacant, finished. Judge Evans has the power to do that under the act. He has the power to suspend the member for a specified period of time. He has the power to reprimand the member, I suppose, in a formal way such that it appears as some sort of formal reprimand, although clearly this sort of finding, when you read what else Judge Evans had to say — again, you've got to understand, it wasn't necessary for Judge Evans to put this in, this wasn't the heart of his finding.

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He said that in his opinion, "Mr Leach is having difficulty in adopting an attitude which is less confrontational," — I guess I could have some empathy with that — "more consistent with his present office as a member of the executive council, and more appreciative of the parliamentary conventions associated therewith."

Let's understand why Judge Evans might have said that. You see, Mr Leach is a recidivist. He is not a first offender. This isn't his first time around the block. It's not his first time up in the prisoner's dock, if you will. He has been found by the Speaker to have been guilty of a prima facie contempt of this Legislature. He was also found to have breached convention when he came to the defence of a staff member who attempted to intervene in litigation against the ministry. That's referred to in Judge Evans's report.

Judge Evans has very limited powers in response to a report, and that's whether or not to interfere with the member's rights as an MPP. Judge Evans declined to exercise that power.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I wonder if you might rule as to whether the member for Welland-Thorold is sticking to the topic at hand.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** Thank you, ma'am. I appreciate the guidance.

We're talking here about the need to debate and the government claims that their rule changes are going to facilitate debate. I'm trying to illustrate how that has nothing to do with the rule changes. I'm getting around to subsection 34(2).

**Mrs Marland:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I'm rising on the same point of order that was made by the member for London Centre when I was speaking earlier in the day, and that is that in my opinion the



member for Welland-Thorold is not speaking to the two amendments, a very narrow sphere. I ask you to rule on that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, the topic under discussion is the amendment to the motion on the rules.

**Mr Kormos:** Quite right, Speaker. The member for Mississauga South's opinion would be relevant had she been elected Speaker. If she wants to express her opinion, her opinion about whether or not I'm on topic isn't the issue here; the Speaker's opinion is. I'm talking about debate. I'm talking about the fact that this government shies away from debate. Opposition members spent hours today trying to impress the government, its House leader, its Premier, and yes, looking for some support, I suppose, from the backbenchers about the need to debate, as the law requires us to debate, the gross misconduct of one of Mike Harris's ministers.

The Premier came into the House today saying: "Oh, Al Leach, third-time offender, ah, heck, the poor young boy was just misguided. He didn't know any better. Gosh, he thought it was okay."

The Minister of Health knew it wasn't okay. Jim Wilson indicated clearly that it was improper.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Welland-Thorold, in keeping with the requests of the other members, would you please keep to the topic.

**Mr Kormos:** I certainly will, Speaker.

The Minister of Health knew it wasn't okay; his colleague the Minister of Housing simply didn't care. That's what Judge Evans says. You've got a minister who has been incapable of learning the conventions.

The opposition wanted to debate this, the very sort of debate that the Tory backbenchers argue is going to be facilitated by their rule changes. But not one Tory backbencher stood up today with the same concern that people across this province have today, this evening, about the misconduct of their minister and the obligation of members of this assembly to consider and respond to the report of the commissioner. Not one Tory backbencher stood up and concurred that yes, there should be compliance by this assembly with the Members' Integrity Act and that there should be a debate and that they'd be willing to participate in it. I've got some real problems with the argument the government is using to support their so-called rule changes.

I listened with great interest to the highly appropriate comments of the member for Renfrew North and his observation, which I think was most pointed, that this is

all about reserving yet more power for the inner circle, for the Premier and the cabinet. Somehow government backbenchers have bought into the bill of goods that has been peddled off to them and have allowed themselves to be used, I tell you, as dupes, pawns, in what is yet an increasing concentration of power by a Premier and a cabinet that, notwithstanding the promises — do you recall the promise of consultation? Do you remember that one?

I took a look at it again, where it says "Public Involvement" in the little blue book the Tories, like Maoist zealots, waved above their head, chanting in unison "Revolution now" during the campaign in 1995. In that little blue book it says, "We are ready to listen, to learn and to work with anyone who wants to" — maybe this is the operative word — "join us." You see, if you're not with them, they're not prepared to listen, they're not prepared to learn and they're not prepared to work with you.

I beg to differ with some of the defensiveness, the highly inappropriate defensiveness, of more than a few of the Tory comments. They talked about preserving those things so many Canadians fought for in wars. Let me tell you, when the working people I know, including the veterans, witnessed this government's attack on workers by virtue of Bill 7, without one hour of consultation, they shook their heads in disgust, because that wasn't democracy, it wasn't listening to people, it wasn't consulting people, it wasn't learning from people; it was this government imposing its arbitrary will on a whole class of people, working people, who deserve far better treatment from any government, regardless of which colour or stripe they are.

This government holds democracy in disdain. They want to talk a big game. An illustration of the disdain this government has for, let's say, speaking up and speaking out is the treatment of their parliamentary assistants who dared to speak up, who dared to say what was on their minds and what was on the minds, I'm sure, of some of their constituents. You saw Toni Skarica — out; Bill Murdoch — gone; Gary Carr — out.

What did Gary Carr say about this government after he was treated so abruptly when he tried to speak up? Gary Carr, former parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General, said, "Mike Harris has got to realize this is still a democracy, not a dictatorship."

**The Acting Speaker:** It being 12 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 0002.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line	Should read:
210A	11020	2	31	The Environmental Protection Act, regulation 346, gives you

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Thursday 26 June 1997

Jeudi 26 juin 1997



Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 juin 1997

*The House met at 1002.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### UNION FEES

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should disallow the undemocratic requirement of mandatory fee checkoff by trade unions for those casual, probationary or contract employees who do not benefit from union membership but are still required to pay union dues. In addition, I move that union members be allowed to refuse to contribute to union-specific political parties or causes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Fox, according to the standing orders, you have 10 minutes to make a presentation.

**Mr Fox:** First, let me state clearly that this resolution is not about union busting, an accusation you will undoubtedly hear today from the opposition.

I agree that a trade union representing employees in the bargaining unit should be allowed to enter into an agreement with the employer and have regular mandatory union dues deducted from each employee in the unit who will benefit by the collective agreement. However, I do not agree that those casual, probationary or contract employees who do not benefit from the protection of a union should be required to pay mandatory union dues.

I feel that we have lost sight of the function of a union. Throughout time the role and mandate of unions has grown into the broader realm of political and social activists. Their power and position has escalated to the degree that they dictate which political parties their unions will support or protest against.

Historically, when a labour union tried to organize a plan, it would encourage as many employees as possible to become members of the union. Unions found it difficult to cover their expenses and, consequently, they exerted pressure on employers to agree to deduct union dues from an employee's pay and forward them to the union. Many employers agreed that union membership should be a matter of individual conscience and decision.

As a compromise, Ivan C. Rand, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, drew up the Rand formula, which requires all employees covered by the collective agreement to pay dues to the union whether they are members of the union or not. This compulsory dues checkoff has allowed organized labour to collect over \$1 billion a year from Canadian workers.

Talk to union leaders about the need for democratic reforms in the labour movement and you'll be told that at every level unions are the most democratic institutions in the country. Talk to the rank-and-file workers, however, and you'll get a different response. Interestingly, a survey released in the spring of 1997 reveals that a growing number of Canadians would like to see union practices become more open.

A poll conducted by the Angus Reid Group showed that 57% of Canadians approve unions, but 90% do not believe union membership should be a condition of employment. A further 80% do not agree that a worker, once hired, should be required to join the union chosen by the majority of workers. This poll also showed that 61% of respondents believe that both union membership and the payment of union dues should be voluntary.

I believe that compulsory dues should be devoted entirely to collective bargaining. Union leaders have assumed a mandate they do not have. They have encroached on the moral, social and political lives of their membership. An overwhelming majority of workers want basic freedoms introduced into the workplace. Workers want freedom to stop unions from using compulsory dues to fill the coffers of political parties and organizations they, as individuals, do not support.

Ordinary workers have very little say in what the union's head office does. Today they operate in a top-down structure, which raises concerns over how dues are handled relating to the salaries and perks enjoyed by top union officials.

Is it true that in 1992 the Canadian Auto Workers union built a \$125,000 summer cottage for outgoing president, Bob White, even as thousands of its members were being laid off in plant closures? I hope not.

We must keep reminding ourselves that the role of a union is to bargain on behalf of its members. Union leadership has to start to be attentive to the real needs and desires of the rank-and-file worker rather than their own quest for money and forced union power.

A recent example of unions trying to control and dictate government agenda was in the fall 1996 Metro Days of Action, when union funds were used in an attempt to shut down Toronto, not only denying individuals their democratic right to work but denying workers the right to say where their dues were being spent.

Organized labour, angry with the Harris government Ontario Works agenda, threatened to withdraw its financial support to the United Way if their agencies participate in Ontario Works. Should unions be allowed this degree of control and power? I don't think so. Charities are important to the future of society, contributing to the needs of individuals, and should never be used as pawns by organized labour in its endeavour to oppose government policies.



In support of their strike action, private employer unions contributed over \$22 million in interest-free loans to the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. Again, I would question whether top union officials discussed this expenditure with their membership or received individual approval for this allocation of funds to support another union's agenda.

It should be noted that Canada is still one of the last industrialized countries where closed shops and mandatory dues are legal. There are approximately 101 countries that have, either through legislation, court decisions or international agreements, outlawed closed shop provisions altogether.

1010

In Quebec, Bedard is involved in a case before the Superior Court where 17 claimants are alleging that closed shop provisions and mandatory union dues violate the charter of rights, particularly freedom of association.

By opposing democracy in the workplace, labour leaders are revealing that they are afraid that if workers are given a choice, union powers will be seriously diminished. They should stop clinging to outdated and restrictive labour practices and start focusing on convincing employees of the benefits of union membership.

I am concerned that organized labour has the ability to restrict hiring to only those who belong to specific unions. The most vulnerable to layoffs are both federal and provincial public service term or contract employees. Those workers pay the same union dues as full-time public service employees but are entitled to nothing — no job security, no payouts and no severance package.

With hiring freezes, term employees have been the only new blood coming into an aging public service. They're typically young, university-educated and predominantly female. They rank among the bureaucracy's best and brightest and are highly motivated to keep the contracts coming.

Ad mail carriers, who deliver advertising flyers to your home, are another example of employees who must pay union dues but do not get union wages, nor do they qualify for union benefits. Part-time taxi drivers find themselves in the same position, where they have to pay union dues but get no protection.

Summer students working within a union environment have unions dues deducted at source from their pay, and subcontractors who are not part of a specific union have been denied contracts which have been granted to others who support the same union.

Unions, like governments, are guaranteed financing by deductions removed directly from employees' paycheques. This special position should require guarantees of financial accountability to ensure that all bargaining unit members know and have a way of finding out how their money is being spent. It's time to put more control back into the hands of the rank-and-file employees who pay union dues.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Unfortunately, this resolution represents yet another attack on the trade union movement in Ontario if you look at the actual wording of the resolution.

It's not as though this is trying to tear down a law which was established by what would be considered to be a pro-labour government. It's not as though you're undoing, for instance, some of the things you complained about that the NDP may have introduced.

What you're in effect doing, if you pass this resolution and if it is brought to its conclusion, is removing something that either the Davis or the Robarts government granted to the trade union movement in Ontario, and they did it back when there was a more balanced government, a more balanced approach to labour legislation. What you often found was that governments in those days, under Bill Davis or John Robarts, when passing labour legislation would ensure that within that labour legislation there were items which would be favourable to what unions had asked for and some favourable to what management had asked for, so you developed what was called a balance in terms of labour legislation. It is always dangerous and unhealthy when labour legislation is radically skewed in favour of either one side or the other. Most people who are involved in collective bargaining expect and accept labour legislation which is indeed balanced.

What this is is another idea coming up from the United States, from the Republican Party in the United States. There are a number of states where trade unions are under attack. They are ordinarily the southern states, the less industrialized states in the United States. Unfortunately, at a time when workers are under assault from a variety of factors — and when I say "assault," I say that in a symbolic way — such as impending job losses, downsizing, restructuring and so on, they require the trade unions to be able to defend their interests. Without a trade union, the consequences for many of those people affected by severe downsizing or restructuring are rather tragic. That is why they form unions and that is why they join unions, because collectively they can have more influence in the bargaining process than they can individually by themselves.

What I'm looking at then is an attack on the Davis administration or the Robarts administration for conferring these particular rights on trade unions, keeping in mind that when they were conferred on the trade union movement, there were other items that would be more favourable to management. In that way, Mr Davis and Mr Robarts, former Conservative premiers, tried to bring what they felt was some balance to labour legislation in the province.

The member has dealt with a number of complaints that he has heard over the years. I can't comment on those individual complaints because I'm not familiar with the specific complaints he has heard, but they in many cases can be dealt with by members of trade unions attending union meetings and having an effect.

We have seen in recent years some very feisty contests for leadership positions and other lower-ranking executive positions within unions where if there's some dissatisfaction, there is a democratic right of some people to express that by running for public office and trying to gather support. Indeed, in some circumstances there have been some what you would call upsets, I suppose, or unpredicted results on elections. That is because union



members have exercised the rights they have to attend meetings, to go out and vote, to become involved in the process. I think everybody in a healthy democracy wants all of those individuals to take part in that process and to express their views.

But what this resolution does is that it removes, for want of a better word, the Rand formula, which was established some time ago and is accepted by virtually everybody. It's hard to believe, when the member for Lincoln and now the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings raise these issues, that we would be going back so far as to remove the Rand formula. I don't always agree with some of the legislation you have proposed in the field of labour law, but in some cases what you are doing is removing what you felt a previous NDP or perhaps Liberal government had put in place. In this case you want to remove what a Conservative government has put in place.

If anything, today workers are much more in need of protection from downsizing, from restructuring, from layoffs, than ever before. Because of the employment situation, they are very vulnerable.

You have to look at the other factor that all of those who work in a workplace benefit from the collective agreement that is signed by the union. Some don't want to pay the dues, but very few of those who don't want to pay the dues are prepared to say, "I'm going to take less money" or "I don't want the benefits" or "I don't want the protection that the union has provided for me." Very few would say that; it would be a very rare case.

Many are prepared to not pay the union dues but are quite happy, thank you, to take the benefits in terms of health care benefits, pension benefits and sickness and accident benefits that have been won through the collective bargaining process where both sides sit down, where management and labour sit down, they go through some difficult negotiations sometimes, and they come to a collective agreement. Sometimes the collective agreement tends to favour management more in certain circumstances, particularly taking into account the economy, and sometimes it benefits those on the labour side.

For instance, when the economy is booming, when there's a great demand for employees and perhaps a shortage of employees available in a particular field, labour tends to do better. When the economic situation is very difficult, where there's a lot of unemployment, where there's a lot of uncertainty, management tends to come out of the collective bargaining process, by and large, better. I think what we always need in our labour legislation in this province is balance. I think this resolution, if it were adopted by this House, would not strike that balance.

A very similar bill put forward by the member for Lincoln was defeated in this House just a couple of weeks ago. Interestingly enough, it was defeated not just by the opposition but by some of the moderate Conservatives who understand that this is pretty radical, to be removing the Rand formula. This is not tinkering; this is a very fundamental aspect of labour legislation that's been in effect, and I hope members will reflect very carefully upon that as they vote later on on this resolution.

1020

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** It's quite breathtaking to consider all that this government has undertaken in terms of legislation they've brought in so far and the undemocratic nature of it. To all those watching today, in terms of the debate held a few weeks ago on Bill 131, which would create a right-to-work state in the country of Canada, and today's resolution, which would indeed roll back the Rand formula, this is the future. This is the future of where this government is going should they win another election. That ought to scare the hell out of anybody that cares a whit about this province.

The fact is that this government is going after the labour movement for a couple of reasons. One is that of course they can label the labour movement a special interest group, which automatically, in their eyes, demonizes them. Banks and others in society who have a lot of power and have a lot of money and have a lot of control, they're not a special interest. No, no, the banks are not a special interest. But the labour movement? Let's tag them a special interest, because then you can go after them, then they can become a legitimate target, in your mind, something that needs to be beaten down.

But the reality for people in this province is that if you care about the plight of seniors, you need a strong labour movement. If you care about health care in this province, you need a strong labour movement. If you care about the environment, if you care about women's rights, if you care about child poverty, if you care about anything to do with something other than those who already have, you have to have a strong labour movement. That's the second reason this government's going after the labour movement.

Anybody who's active in their community or watches what's happening or watches their local municipal council on TV will realize that this government has cut the legs out from any group at all that might oppose their hard, right-wing, ideological agenda.

It's my opinion that this government realizes that the only real group that can provide the kind of leadership and expertise and communication ability in our modern world, that is organized enough to mount a democratic opposition in a pluralistic society — where did the concept of pluralism in democracy go, anyway, with this government? The labour movement is the one entity that can mount enough mass opposition to bring this government down in the next election, and this government knows it, and they're the only ones that can mount community response.

As we see all the media being bought up — we have one of the highest concentrations of media control in all the world. That's not just some wild-eyed radical idea; the facts are there. And the concentration continues; we see it in our papers every day. This government knows that. They like it. It's their friends who own the media. This is a great idea to them.

But ultimately they've got to get after the labour movement, and that's what this is all about. So was Bill 131 and so was Bill 7, when you attacked public sector workers and took away their right to continue and have job protection when you privatize. It's the same under



Bill 49, when you took away workers' rights under the Employment Standards Act. It's the same under Bill 99, where you're taking money out of the pockets of injured workers and giving it to your corporate pals; \$6 billion you're giving out of the pockets of injured workers. It's the same with Bill 136, where you're ensuring there's now a mechanism to gut collective agreements, again to set up privatization.

What does all this mean at the end of the day? What it means for working people, whether you're union or non-union, and quite frankly, whether you're management, is a lower standard of living. This is very much an agenda that races to the bottom.

Four times now — three at least, but I think it's four — we've been chosen the greatest country in the world to live in. Ontario being the largest province, with 46% or 47% of the economy, what happens in Ontario as a society plays a large role, an incredible role, in identifying and defining why Canada is this kind of place. Every single factor you look at, in terms of our health care system and our social services system and what used to be proper and decent environmental protection and care for our seniors, all those things, if you study your history, guess what? There's the labour movement, front and centre, every time.

All the things you're undoing and attacking are those very issues that make this the greatest place in the world to live. What's so hard to believe is that they would have the audacity to continue to put this out in the public arena and think it's going to sell. I guess that's partly because they've achieved what they wanted so far. All the bills I've mentioned are either the law now or will be very shortly.

But this government believes they can do anything. When they were elected in June 1995, they believed that was the last time they had to talk to or listen to anyone and that as long as they play their politics right, as long as they can win 52 seats — because that's all it will take next time, 52 seats to win a majority government — as long as they can win 52 seats, everything else be damned.

You believe you can get away with this kind of agenda in the province of Ontario, and now we're at the point where we're debating the rule changes. You don't think you can implement these changes, these frightening changes, fast enough, so you want new rules so you can ram them through this place even quicker.

That's what's so frightening when we see these things being brought up in private members' time. This is foretelling the future. We knew that Bill 131, even it passed the Legislature, would not become law — not this time. And I would hope this wouldn't carry today; there can't be that many dinosaurs over there. But if it should, I still don't believe they will put this on this mandate's agenda. But I have no doubt in my mind that if you do manage to pull off those 52 seats — God help us if you do, and I don't think you will, but if you should — I have no doubt that 131 and the Rand formula are on the line, first off, fresh out of the gate with their new mandate. This is exactly what they're going to do.

**Interjection:** Stay tuned.

**Mr Christopherson:** I just heard one of the members in the back there holler, "Stay tuned." It's there. It's

there. This is where they're heading. It may take a month, it may take a year, it might take five years, it might take 10 years. Quite frankly, if it takes 20 years, you will not defeat the labour movement and the rights inherent behind it.

These laws and protections came about for a reason. It was because we didn't have the ability, as the world changed during the Industrial Revolution, to provide for those who didn't have. We just keep seeing the growing and growing disparity.

This came out of a 1946 strike at Ford in Windsor where the people took to the streets. The army was on standby. The Premier was urging the Prime Minister at the time, if necessary, to bring in the army. The mayor in that community knew this was going to lead to a blood-bath. There were injuries and there was blood spilled, but fortunately we didn't have civil war. Instead, we had a reasoned outcome, a reasoned, thought-out, balanced, fair outcome, and that was the Rand formula. That's what this is all about: taking on that Rand formula.

1030

Let me close my remarks, because my colleagues also want to get in on this debate, by saying to anyone who's watching or who reads these Hansards or cares at all about the things that matter in this province to the vast majority of people, this is your fight too. If you're a senior at home worrying about health care, if you're a laid-off worker or you're in the public sector or you've got a spouse who's in the public sector and their job is about to be privatized and you're not sure where you're going to be a year from now, you ought to be concerned about this. If you care about the environment, if you care about child poverty, you ought to care about this, because if they take on and defeat the labour movement, everything else is gone.

By the same token, as long as there's a strong, vibrant labour movement in Ontario and Canada, we've got a fighting chance to make this a better place to live — God, we don't hear that much any more — so we can go on to be the kind of society we are.

Let me end by saying that I don't care how many resolutions or how many bills you dinosaurs bring into this place, you will not stop the labour movement. You have no right to attack the labour movement, you have no right to attack working people and the poor, and you will be stopped. I assure you, you will be stopped.

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I'm certainly pleased to join the debate of this resolution brought forth by Mr Fox. The resolution essentially deals with a dues deduction for casual, probationary and contract employees, and also addresses specific political parties or causes being given dues deductions.

The relevant provision under the Labour Relations Act is section 47, which deals with dues deduction. I think we have to make it very clear right now that it's a permissive right; it's not an absolute right that unions have dues deducted. When you read section 47, the deduction is a permissive right on behalf of unions and it does apply to each employee in the bargaining unit, be it a full-time, part-time, casual or contract employee. The right that has been given applies to every employee in the bargaining unit and it's a permissive right.



The resolution focuses on fairness and equality to employees in the bargaining unit. This permissive right, I would submit, is not fairly applied and may be abused where the dues are not used to provide meaningful and equal representation for all employees in the unit. The government provides statutory rights to employees throughout the province, be it part-time, full-time, casual or contractual employees, through the Human Rights Code, through the Occupational Health and Safety Act, through the Employment Standards Act, through the Workers' Compensation Act, to name a few. That has to be contrasted with the rights provided through a freely negotiated collective agreement between a union and an employer.

The reality is that it's not the same for all employees in a bargaining unit. Full-time employees have greater rights with respect to seniority and the benefits that brings, with respect to layoff rights, with respect to recall, vacation, benefits and pension, in comparison to casual or part-time or contract employees. I think that's what Mr Fox is focusing on when he deals with the use of union dues deductions and the realities of the collective agreement and whether they are being used to support and provide rights for all employees in the unit. I think it's his submission that in fact they're not. What we're looking for is fairness and equality and to give them an opportunity — because there are employee rights in this province; it's not always union rights and employer rights — where they're not getting the same benefits of full-time employees.

That leads me to address the other issue with respect to the use of union dues deductions for political causes, political parties etc. The purpose of the Labour Relations Act, under section 2, is very clear. I'll quote just one part of it, because there are some specific purposes. The purpose under the Labour Relations Act is to facilitate collective bargaining "between employers and trade unions as the freely designated representatives of employees." The purpose, for collective bargaining purposes, is to collectively bargain and also to provide meaningful representation under the collective agreement. That's the purpose under the Labour Relations Act.

When you look at the definition of a trade union under the act, the definition of a trade union is very specific. It means "an organization of employees formed for purposes that include the regulation of relations between employees and employers." What we're dealing with there is strictly collective bargaining within the workplace. There is no place in the Labour Relations Act that specifically says that union dues or collective bargaining are to be used for political causes; no express language. It's silent, and it's obvious why it's silent: because it's not to be used for that.

When you look at regular union dues as defined under section 47, they are to be paid "in accordance with the constitution and bylaws of the trade union." I think what Mr Fox is getting at here is basically looking at amending that to make sure it's not used for political causes and it's also used to provide meaningful representation for part-time, casual and contract employees.

The premise under section 47 of the Labour Relations Act for union dues deductions is that dues will be used

for collective bargaining purposes, to negotiate a collective agreement and to provide meaningful representation under the collective agreement. What we're looking for under this resolution is a balance of employee rights versus union rights, and the use of the dues for purposes within the context of the Labour Relations Act: for collective bargaining and representation.

The resolution is designed to place reasonable limits on the use of union dues within the realities of the Labour Relations Act, which is designed strictly for collective bargaining purposes; and also the workplace realities, where part-time, casual and contract employees have minimal rights under the collective agreement versus full-time employees.

Mr Fox, through his resolution, is identifying the reality of the workplace, the reality of the labour relations community in the province and the reality of the law. I think he's being fair with respect to employee rights in this context, which should be recognized under the act.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** As I begin, I just want to acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Jack MacDonald, former mayor of the city of Hamilton, who is visiting today, and also Candace Gingrich, the spokesperson for the American Human Rights Campaign and of course the sister of the US House Speaker, Newt Gingrich. Welcome to Toronto and welcome to Canada, Ms Gingrich.

On the bill itself, what we see here today is part of the ongoing Tory attack on the labour movement in this province. As this government continues to attack the labour movement, they continue to attack working men and women across this province. We have seen this right from the day they took office. Every single piece of labour legislation that has been brought forward has been slanted against the worker. Every single piece of health and safety legislation or reform has been slanted against the worker. The WCB bill in front of the House is also slanted against working men and women.

I don't understand — and my colleague from Hamilton Centre outlined some of the reasoning — why this government continues to believe it is fashionable to attack the labour movement; why this government continues to believe it's fashionable, through attacking the labour movement, to attack every single working man and woman across this province. Let me remind you that many of those people you're attacking today through this resolution, many of those people you've attacked through your legislation in the past, are folks who voted in good conscience and with the right intention for this government last time. You're not simply attacking the people you believe are opposing you, being the labour leaders; you're attacking the workers, the people they represent.

1040

The labour movement, and the member gave some examples, has its faults, as any other organization and every government in this province has or continues to have or has had in the past. But the reality is there's a mechanism within those movements for dealing with the problems. Leaders are elected democratically by the membership, they are accountable to the membership, and they are there to represent the membership, as you were elected to represent the people of this province. But



somehow you feel that you only need to represent certain groups, certain individuals who agree with your point of view, who agree with your philosophy, and to hell with everyone else.

I don't really understand why this government continues to believe that the politics of division should rule the day. You believe in the old, outdated, regressive political approach that you add by subtracting, that it's okay if we get rid of all these people here, whether it's right or wrong, because we're going to win all these people over here. The right or wrong of an issue doesn't matter any more; it's simply old style division politics that you have practised from day one.

This government is a bully government. This government has no respect for democracy. This government has no respect for anyone who dares to oppose its agenda on the people of Ontario, because you believe that on June 8, 1995, you received a blank cheque to do whatever you want to anyone in this province.

The reality is that in our democratic system it isn't that neat and simple, it doesn't quite work that way, and you don't understand that. You continue to believe you can just go across this province and attack, attack, attack: go after people, go after single moms, go after welfare recipients, go after school boards, go after teachers, go after the labour movement. It just becomes the mantra of this government: "You don't agree with us, we're going to destroy you. You don't agree with us, we're going to put you down. You don't agree with us, we're going to make sure you have no power left to speak out against us." We're seeing it in the House; we're seeing it outside the House. We see the intimidation that has occurred, or the attempts at intimidation that they've tried to pull off on people who have dared to speak against this government.

We're seeing it through the rule changes very clearly again. The government and government members, through supporting those changes, believe very much that opposition gets in the way of your agenda, that democracy gets in the way of your revolution, that your revolution is not moving fast enough so you need to curtail the opposition in order for this revolution to succeed.

You have a right to govern. You have received that mandate to govern, but it does not mean that you have the mandate to simply steamroll and run over and run roughshod over anybody or anything that dares to disagree with your agenda. In our system it doesn't work that way. It may work that way in some Third World banana republics; it doesn't work that way in a democratic society in the province of Ontario.

This resolution here today, again, is simply an attack on those who dare to oppose you, an attack on union leaders and working men and women who are not happy with your agenda, who are not happy with what you did in Bill 7, who are not happy with what you did with the health and safety changes in Ontario, who are not happy with what you're doing to injured workers and the punishment that you're further going to inflict on people who are already suffering in this province. How dare these people who are not happy speak out against you? How dare they try to take on Mike Harris and the revolution? Don't they know there's a revolution in this

province, that people on June 8 wanted a revolution? This government is going to give them that revolution, and how dare anybody get in the way of that?

How dare the labour leaders speak out when their workers are being oppressed by this government? How dare the representatives of injured workers speak out on behalf of injured men and women in this province who have suffered a workplace injury and are only trying to get fair, decent and reasonable treatment at the hands of the people who have caused that injury or have been part of that injury, who run the companies, who run the government?

That is really what is driving this bill. It's not necessarily even the details, because this thing is so bizarre that, as my colleague from Hamilton Centre mentioned earlier, I don't think there are enough people on the Tory side of the House who actually believe this is a reasonable and fair way of doing it, but it's the message it sends out. It's the ongoing message it sends out: Don't you dare criticize us, don't you dare attack our agenda, because if you do, we're going to come after you with all guns blazing and we're going to use the might and the power and the stick of government to suppress any type of opposition. I think it's an ongoing disgraceful attack on the labour movement in this province, on working men and women. Remember that next time around many of those working men and women who voted for you last time with all the right intentions are going to slam you, vote against you and cause your defeat.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I am pleased to have a couple of moments to take part in this debate on the resolution from the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings. The problem that he has with the trade union movement puzzles me somewhat because he makes inferences about "non-democratic" and about the use of union dues and so forth.

I happen to live in a community that largely has been traditionally known as a very labour-intensive community, the community of Sudbury, with strong unions: the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, now affiliated with the CAW, and the United Steelworkers, who represent the workers at Inco. Those workers — not the labour leaders, the workers — have voted democratically to support their choice of political party. They've decided that, not some boss somewhere else. They decided themselves. They have votes on whether or not to contribute to the New Democratic Party or to contribute to my campaign or anybody else's campaign. That's democratic. The shareholders at the Royal Bank don't have a say in whether or not the Royal Bank makes a contribution to the Tory party or the Reform Party. They don't have any say. But workers have a say in where their dues go. The Tories don't seem to understand that.

I must say that I've been a very strong supporter of the trade union movement ever since I saw what happened to my own father. I don't like to personalize these things too often, but my father — and I say this directly to the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings — was a farm labourer, and when his back gave out on him, he was out the door with zero benefits. Out the door. I don't think that's right, and I think that's one of the things unions are for. This was a wealthy farmer. This



was not a struggling family farm operation. This was a wealthy farmer, and yet there was absolutely no consideration given to him once his back started to give him trouble. That was it; he was gone. To me, that's fundamentally wrong in a society like ours, and that's one of the reasons why unions grew.

The record of safety in our mines and forests before unions appeared on the scene was outrageous and, quite frankly, disgusting. Who has done more to promote safety and health in the workplace than the trade union movement? Nobody. Nobody has done more: not governments, quite frankly, and certainly not employers. Honest employers will tell you that too, that they've been pushed hard by the trade unions when it comes to health and safety on the job, because they protect their members.

I don't have any problem with everyone who gets the benefits of a trade union's efforts and bargaining having to contribute to that cause. Why should some have the benefits and not pay for them and others have the benefits and pay for them? That's not fair. That doesn't make any sense at all.

I say to the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings, I understand where you're coming from, but you're sending out some pretty bizarre signals. I would ask you, how many cabinet ministers do you think are going to be in here to support this resolution at 12 o'clock? I will be amazed if there's a single cabinet minister in here to support you or, quite frankly, to vote against you, because they're worried about the Reform vote in the next election. So they just won't be here. The cabinet will not be here to vote on this. They don't have the courage. They weren't here to support the member for Lincoln —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** It's a pleasure today to rise in support of the private member's resolution of my colleague the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings.

There are a number of reasons that have induced me to be vocal in support of this resolution. In the short period of time that I am allowed, I would like to have these put on the record.

First, let me reiterate the reason for the resolution. It is about protecting the rights of those who, for whatever reason, have not attained permanent status in their job. I have no quarrel with the normal position of union dues being paid by a permanent employee under a collective bargaining agreement. When I say I have no quarrel, it basically means I recognize the requirement under law for this automatic transfer of money. Although the collection of dues is mandated, the performance and responsibilities of the union leadership on their behalf are not.

1050

Clearly, this resolution is not an attempt to create any groundswell in opposition to the Rand formula. That automatic dues checkoff system has been accepted by the public as a reasonable and practical way to fund union activities. None the less, those who are exposed to the imposition of paying union dues while not receiving any services in return indeed have a reason to wonder about both the common sense and the legal rationale behind this

forced extraction of hard-earned income from this group who receive little in return.

I do not have to look much farther than my own friends to cite an individual illustration of almost minimal return for the dollars involved.

Let us begin with a friend who has been retired for five years from his 40-year tenure as an employee of the telephone company. In the course of his long term of duty he paid union dues for a number of years and ended up in a management position. Not willing to accept retirement with little job activity, he pursued avenues that might gain him employment, and so here we have a person approaching senior status who through diligence gains employment with the post office as a temporary worker. This is achieved at the same time as many of our healthy younger unemployed claim there is no work available, but that is another question, aside from our debate today.

In securing this work, he finds that he must pay dues to CUPW as a condition of his employment. Although he hasn't complained publicly, you can be assured there is little activity by the union leaders that would lead to any improvement for him.

This is a simple textbook analysis in support of my colleague's resolution, which can only be refuted with great difficulty. Basically, he must pay for the right, however temporary, to work alongside the permanent workers who have security, health plans and pension benefits.

Not wanting to stray too far from the resolution, I believe this little sketch points out that even with the Rand formula permanently in place, many of our citizens are both unprotected and alienated from their union leadership with no recourse for change. Only at provincial election time, in a philosophical way, can voters do anything to rectify the complaints of those who do not agree with either the program or the purpose of union activists who control the agenda.

In today's environment we increasingly see a subclass of employees — the casual, the temporary, the contract workers — who share the cost but not the long-term benefits of the permanent union employee.

This poses an interesting conundrum, because union executives can complain that their employer should hire only full-time people and then everyone would be equal. That would be so in a perfect world, and in that creation everyone would have a job and there would be no unemployment. Naturally, despite George Orwell and his predictions, Big Brother never did expand to the point where full employment and similar remuneration is enjoyed by all.

Unions don't like the temporary, the casual or the contract person, but they are mollified by the influx of cash, duly delivered without any accountability.

**Mr Christopherson:** That's insulting.

**Mr Kells:** That's fine.

There is probably at the present time no solution to the imbalance between collection of dues and service rendered as they relate to the different classes of employees. Since the Rand system is so ingrained in the employer-worker culture, perhaps society should turn its attention to developing a protocol that satisfies union demands for equal fees from those involved in similar toil while



providing those who fall into the not-permanent category with representation and equitable voting power at the union table.

Traditionally, we all agree and accept the axiom, "No taxation without representation." To be fair then, the casual, the temporary, the contract person should have it acknowledged that there should be no collection of dues without an equivalent say for all. That's why I'm supporting this resolution.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise and to tell two important stories from my constituency as they relate to this debate.

I have a constituent who lives in Nepean and who has worked in his workplace for a good number of years, who chose to speak out and say he didn't agree with the tactics of his union, he didn't agree with the process they were following. Not only by his actions; he spoke out through the newspaper, through writing letters to the editor. He had his membership suspended in that trade union. They said that he wouldn't be allowed to go to the union meetings and vote, that he wouldn't be allowed to fully participate in that trade union.

You can appreciate he was rather surprised when he got his next pay stub and discovered his union dues were still being deducted. It was taxation without representation. He had no choice. Despite the fact that he was paying union dues, he had no voice in terms of how decisions were made at his union, and he still doesn't. He's been having to pay for a good number of months, even years, those union dues while he was suspended, simply because he had the courage to stand up and say he disagreed with it, by his actions and by his public comments. He was suspended. There is no fairness, there is no democratic ability in that.

One thing in Canada and in Ontario is that if you disagree with the government you still have the right to vote. They can't suspend you and then require you to pay taxes, because one of the most central elements of democracy is no taxation without representation. I think this resolution seeks to address a good amount of that concern.

I can tell you as well that in Nepean there was a good amount of concern when one prominent national trade union said it would pay the wages of any worker in its union who wanted to take time off during the federal election to support a candidate. Those people discovered that when they wanted to go and take time off, they couldn't work for the Liberal Party — they wouldn't be allowed — they couldn't work for Reform, they couldn't work for the PCs, but if they worked for the NDP, the union would pay.

If they worked for the Bloc québécois, the party that was trying to destroy this country, their union would pay the way, and I think that's wrong. I think it's wrong for Canada and I think it's wrong for Ontario. It's wrong. It kills jobs and is just in my mind absolutely outrageous.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** The two main components that concern me about this resolution and my support of it concentrate on the barriers that are brought up by the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings. Where are the benefits for the dues paid, particularly for part-timers who are required to join

unions? That's one key element. The second item that concerns a lot of the rank and file of organized labour unions, of which I was once a member, of one of the most powerful unions in this province, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, was how they used money unaccountably.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings has two minutes.

**Mr Fox:** First, I'd like to thank my colleagues for the presentations they've made here this morning. Some comments made by the member for St Catharines, saying that this resolution is against the Rand formula — the thing is, the Angus Reid poll figures show that employees are also against the Rand formula. The members for Hamilton Centre, Hamilton East: repetitious, same old story, no constructive criticism to the resolution whatsoever. The member for Nickel Belt: The resolution doesn't deal with the comments he made here in the House this morning.

In conclusion, I would like to add that in addition to our promise to repeal Bill 40, we campaigned to shift the power from labour bosses to union members, restore individual choice and democratize internal union decision-making. I feel we have an obligation to the people of Ontario to continue democratizing the workplace, even after the passage of Bill 7.

This resolution is not about the devolution of power of unions, it is not trying to usurp the authority of unions, nor is it an attempt to reverse gains made by unions such as health and safety standards for workers; rather it is an attempt to protect the rights of the most vulnerable workers, those casual, probationary and contract employees who pay union dues but do not benefit from full union protection. The pendulum has swung too far in favour of union management. It's time to balance the power between management and the ordinary worker.

You'd be surprised how many times in my own riding I have had constituents coming to my door expressing their objections to the powers that union officials yield over ordinary workers. These individuals are asking why they are being forced to join specific unions and how can a collective agreement apply to them when they are not part of this union. I can't give them an answer, but I can —

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.  
1100

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain):** I move that in the opinion of this House, given that the government of Ontario has viewed municipal restructuring as a key component of delivering government services effectively and efficiently throughout this province; and

Since the government of Ontario has so far acted on this in Bills 26 and 103; and

Since the region of Hamilton-Wentworth has been undergoing a restructuring exercise for the past three years without success; and

Since the people of Hamilton-Wentworth agree that local government reform is necessary to provide efficient and accountable government at less cost to taxpayers; and



Since the government of Ontario has so far put forward two workable plans for local government reform in Hamilton-Wentworth;

Therefore the government of Ontario should take the initiative as soon as possible before the municipal fall elections to implement a plan that reduces waste and duplication in the delivery of local government services and creates a single, unified level of representation for the roughly half million residents of the region of Hamilton-Wentworth.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member for Hamilton Mountain has 10 minutes.

**Mr Pettit:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity today to speak on behalf of my resolution regarding municipal reform in Hamilton-Wentworth. I believe it is imperative that this government take the initiative as quickly as possible before the next municipal election to implement a plan to create a single, unified level of government for the region of Hamilton-Wentworth.

I'd like to spend the majority of my time this morning giving a very brief summary of some key events in municipal reform in Hamilton-Wentworth. I'd like to do this because I believe the relevant facts on this issue speak for themselves. I also believe the importance of this issue for the community of Hamilton-Wentworth demands that this debate be rational and that it be centred on what is really at stake here. What we are talking about is the broad public interest in Hamilton-Wentworth, a public interest which concerns the long-term social and economic wellbeing of our community.

The question of municipal governance has been dogging Hamilton-Wentworth for over 20 years now. In 1978, the Stewart report, which was commissioned by the then Davis government, concluded that the two-tiered regional government structure in Hamilton-Wentworth did not allow citizens to fully control regional services. Without one authority to set priorities and control total local government expenditures, the report stated that the two-tiered structure was not the most cost-efficient, was not the most effective or the most accountable governing option for Hamilton-Wentworth. It was further observed that regional council policy decisions often ran counter to the best interests of the entire region.

In regard to eliminating the region-wide decision-making body and returning to six independent municipalities, the Stewart report was absolutely clear: This was not a feasible option. Service boards and intermunicipal agreements could not substitute for an area-wide authority.

Almost two decades later, in 1996, the constituent assembly final report, an independent citizen-led review of municipal governance, concluded that a single municipal council for Hamilton-Wentworth provided the best opportunity to ensure the continued delivery of services in an equitable manner. The current governance structure, the report held, was compromising the long-term planning and priority-setting for services that affected all residents.

The constituent assembly also evaluated other models of governance, including the return to six independent municipalities with boards to administer particular services between municipalities. The assembly concluded that this option did not adequately address the challenges

and meet the principles set out in its framework for reform. Moreover, this kind of fragmented governing model was calculated as the least cost-efficient model of governance for Hamilton-Wentworth. In summary, the report made the following key recommendations:

It recommended the creation of a single, unified municipal council and administration to facilitate strategic decision-making across all municipal service areas in support of sustainable development, wealth creation in the region and a simplified administrative system.

It recommended the creation of a new and innovative method of community governance in the form of community committees to make recommendations on community needs and priorities, make decisions on locally specific issues and provide for citizen participation and consultation.

It recommended the creation of community offices based on defined communities of interest for the decentralized delivery of municipal services so citizens would deal with only one administration to access municipal services and would be able to do so at a convenient location within their communities.

I'd like to say a few things about the constituent assembly report, because many within and outside the community of Hamilton-Wentworth believe that it exemplified a process of citizen participation that should be emulated.

From the start, the assembly's mandate was "to involve the community in a region-wide discussion on the role and structure of municipal government and manner of service delivery for the purpose of ensuring a high quality of life for citizens of Hamilton-Wentworth." Informing and involving the public in its work was a key purpose of the assembly. It maintained an open and inclusive process in consulting with citizens, hearing from experts, meeting with individuals and organizations, talking to municipal staff and councillors and working together to reach a consensus on recommendations.

The assembly itself was comprised of 23 citizen volunteers, who represented a broad cross-section of the population of Hamilton-Wentworth. This piece of work is a made-in-Hamilton-Wentworth solution. There are those who will argue against this resolution this morning who will probably say that they agree there should be restructuring in Hamilton-Wentworth, but there should be a local solution to municipal reform. I say to those people, "Here it is. Here's your local solution." What did the local politicians do? They dismissed it out of hand. They commissioned it, but they didn't like what it said so they took their ball and they went home.

Apparently I'm not the only one who thinks the work of the assembly represents a unique process in citizen participation in municipal decision-making. This process has received widespread recognition. Hamilton-Wentworth has lent its expertise in community consultation, participation and governance at the international level. Most recently, it was announced by the International City-County Management Association that the winner of their 1997 excellence in citizenship involvement award is the region of Hamilton-Wentworth for the constituent assembly project.



Three fiscal impact studies have also been done, and together conclude the following:

A single-tier governance model for all of Hamilton-Wentworth has the potential to generate the most significant cost savings.

Six standalone municipalities and the dismantling of a region-wide authority is the least cost-efficient.

A single-tier arrangement offers the greatest opportunity to eliminate barriers to delivering services most efficiently and to provide for coordinated policy outcomes.

The cost of borrowing for area municipalities will be detrimentally impacted with any kind of fragmented governance structure.

A fragmented governance structure threatens the competitive position of the region and may hamper economic development initiatives.

The facts do speak for themselves. They speak so much that the regional government of Hamilton-Wentworth was the subject of an editorial in the *Washington Post* this past Sunday. The article was entitled "Regions that Work: A Lesson from Canada." The article compares the social and economic fate of two cities, the city of Buffalo and the city of Hamilton. At one time Buffalo and Hamilton were very similar kinds of cities: both were medium-sized and both had industrially based steel-producing economies. Then came the early 1970s and both communities were plunged into economic chaos by the Arab oil embargo and international competition which threatened to annihilate their steel industries.

The Canadians, the article observes, responded with rapid restructuring, downsizing the workforce and investing huge amounts in technology and worker skills. They also did something else which was key to their success: they created a top-tier regional municipality and reduced lower governments to almost half. The region took over economic development, planning, health and social services, transit, police and major roadways. Hamilton today isn't a flashy Toronto or a Vancouver, the article goes on to say, but it's packed with mom-and-pop stores, has a new arena, arts centre, lots of cappuccino places and a health race and class mix on its streets. I don't believe I have to paint a picture of what has happened to Buffalo in contrast.

Hamilton was able to meet these serious structural changes to its economy because they created a governance structure to meet these challenges. Buffalo could not make the transition because its local government remained politically fragmented. It is now, according to economists, one of the weakest, if not the weakest, regional economy in the United States.

The article ends with this piece of wisdom: "Until our regions start thinking cohesively, strategically — about the health of downtowns, big land use choices, workforce preparedness, global positioning — they'll be in peril. That's where the Canadian regions have a real lesson to teach us."

I say to my colleagues and especially my good friend from Wentworth North, for whom I have the utmost respect, and who we will hear from this morning, any plan that attempts to eliminate a regional government that played such a major and crucial role in ensuring the economic and social wellbeing of our community so that we

didn't go the way of Buffalo is beyond ludicrous. It is absolutely irrational and runs counter to the lessons of history.

I say to my colleague from Wentworth North that he knows as well as anyone, as every report has tirelessly pointed out, that Hamilton-Wentworth is a single economic unit. All the communities that comprise Hamilton-Wentworth are interdependent. We are part of a whole. The fates of our communities are intertwined. We are for all intents and purposes one community, and our governance structure must more accurately reflect that reality.

To my friend from Wentworth North, we are on the same boat. We'll either float together or we'll sink together. Most certainly, if we pretend we're not in this together we will undoubtedly and most definitely sink.

1110

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I rise to speak to this resolution. I'm not going to waste a great deal of time debating the merits of a one-tier government. I have been a one-tier supporter from my days on city council. I continue to be a one-tier supporter.

I'm here to question what this resolution is all about today, though, what the intent of this resolution is and what is behind this resolution. We are talking about an issue that this government has had the opportunity to act on. This government had a glorious opportunity last November to take decisive action when there was local consensus. The Church deal had been signed by four of the six municipalities; the Church deal had consensus and there was widespread support on this side of the House for the Church deal.

This government, despite its assurances — I as one member and I know others on both sides of the House gave the minister assurances that we would work with him because it was in the best interests of Hamilton-Wentworth and we'd put our political partisanship aside.

This minister failed to act. This government failed to act. There was no excuse for this totally gutless lack of leadership by the minister and by this government in November when the opportunity was there to act and move on one tier for Hamilton-Wentworth. What did we do? We just continued to put the region through months and months of hell — bitter divisions, debate, ongoing fights — when you had a chance to act and you didn't. That is the worst part of all this.

What motivates this today? What motivates this issue? Is it a last-minute grasp by government members, who saw that their government mishandled this and dropped the ball? Their government had an opportunity to act in the best interests of Hamilton-Wentworth and failed to do so. Is this an opportunity to be able to wave this document at election time and say: "My government failed. My government couldn't act. My government didn't have the leadership to act. But do you know what? I supported this. Look, I voted in favour of this resolution."

I'm not going to be part of that game. I tried hard to work with that minister and that government to find a resolution for Hamilton-Wentworth. That minister and that government failed and let the people of Hamilton-Wentworth down.

What is this all about today? Is it another opportunity to embarrass the member for Wentworth North, to show



him that the government members are right and that he's wrong? This was a member who had the guts and courage — I didn't agree with Mr Skarica's position on one-tier government, but I admired his courage, his determination and his gutsiness in representing the people of his riding. What did the government do to him? They punished him. They took away his PA position. They blackballed him because he dared speak out against this government. I give that member a good deal of credit for what he has done on behalf of his constituents. He has paid a political price, but there's courage in what he has done and he should be commended for that.

This bill here today is nothing more than simply a feel-good message. It's too late, folks. It's too late. This government, this minister, as late as a few days ago, have given us no assurances whatsoever that they have any interest in bringing a bill forward enacting this. We are debating a resolution on the last day of the House, which will not resume until the end of August, for an issue that would affect November's municipal election. It is bizarre to think there's going to be any action at this point. It is absolutely bizarre. That window of opportunity you had is gone. That window of opportunity was back last November.

The government failed. It failed miserably when it came to doing what was in the best interests of Hamilton-Wentworth. It gave in to backroom pressures. It gave in to manipulation.

I understand my colleague's intent, but if you listen to him, it sounds like he's not on the government side of the House. He kept talking about a local resolution, about local politicians. Well, local politicians had made the decision; local politicians had that consensus we were looking for, but somehow it wasn't good enough.

I say to my colleague that it is your responsibility as a member of this government and it is your government's responsibility to live up to and defend in Hamilton-Wentworth the failure to act when the opportunity was there. On this side of the House both political parties went beyond the call of duty and extended the olive branch and extended a hand of cooperation to this government to deal with this issue in a way that was in the best interests of Hamilton-Wentworth, and all we got was the back of a hand and a slap in the head by this government.

I cannot support this resolution today. I'm not going to be part of any effort to try to give some coverage to local members who could not get the government to change its mind or give some coverage to a minister or government that failed and let down the people of Hamilton-Wentworth when you had the opportunity. It's disgraceful. It is an embarrassment what this government has done to our region and it is an embarrassment that we're actually still sitting here today and debating this when this House is breaking this afternoon and will not come back until the end of August. I will oppose it.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Let me say at the outset of my remarks that having served as a Hamilton alderman and a regional councillor from 1985 to 1990 when I was elected to this place, my position on one tier is similar to that of my colleague from Hamilton

East. I have always believed that ultimately the future of our community requires a one-tier government structure.

Let's not undervalue the importance of the differences of opinion that exist in the various communities, the six communities. It has always, since it was imposed in 1974, been a focus of major controversy in our community. In fact, former mayor Vic Copps had to be dragged out of the public galleries when the law was passed originally bringing in the regional form of government we now have, the two-tier. The current thinking is that it indeed cost the seat of one of the local Tory members, who was a cabinet minister at the time, because there was so much controversy. I think that needs to be respected and listened to by other members of the House when we talk about this particular local issue.

I want to be very clear. I am very much a one-tier person and believe that's in the best interests of our community. However, I want to address two key points while I'm on my feet here today. The first is the timing of this issue. The second is the moral authority, or lack thereof, the government has in this instance.

**Timing:** This, as has been pointed out, is the last day of the House. We aren't coming back until at least mid-August. Mid-August would leave from August to September, October, November. You're going to give the people of Hamilton-Wentworth three months to prepare for municipal elections at a time when municipal governments and the decisions they make have never had a greater impact on the taxpayers and citizens of our community. We're going to get three months. That certainly serves candidates who are already ready or those who have a lot of money already, but for those who have to do some planning and have to talk to people, it would be nice if they knew what the structure of government was that they were running for, what the positions were. They won't really know now, at the very least, until August.

That's not just the opposition members' opinion. In today's Hamilton Spectator, Henry Jacek, who teaches political science at the McMaster University and I would say is a recognized, respected expert certainly on local politics — and other politics too, Henry; I wasn't trying to suggest it's limited to that — says: "It sounds pretty strange to me. The timing is totally impossible." Well, of course it is, absolutely impossible.

There are rumours floating around our community that this government is looking at delaying the elections for a year and then some other new kind of process. That's the rumour. I haven't had it substantiated. I don't know if others are aware, but that's the rumour. That is equally, in my opinion, unacceptable because you're just playing politics with our community.

1120

My colleague from Hamilton East stated that he was prepared to endorse and vote for the November 8 agreement. I also publicly said I would support that agreement. That position was not universally popular in my caucus and I don't think it was universally popular in his, but as local citizens, local politicians, we've always prided ourselves, all of us from all parties, that we would always, when it came to the crunch, put the interests of the community first when it came to local issues.



On that basis, on that principle, even with some of my colleagues disagreeing with me, I was prepared to support the November 8 agreement. Why? In large part because of the arguments the member for Hamilton Mountain made, particularly when he talked about the constituent assembly and their final report, an excellent process, headed up by two distinguished citizens, Chester Waxman and Don Granger, and it is being used as a model in other places around the world as an example of devolving power to not just local government but to local citizens to give them a chance to actually be involved.

It was an excellent report, and that indeed was the basis of the agreement that was reached on November 8. For those who are not aware, on November 8 we had the signatures on an agreement of four of the six mayors of the six communities making up Hamilton-Wentworth, representing almost 90% of the population. That was the moment when the member for Hamilton Mountain should have been using members' statements every day and using private members' time, back then to use those hours — not today on the last day but back then — and all the other backbench government members. That was the moment for you to say to your government, "You have to move on this."

But what happened? The Hamilton-Wentworth file went to the bottom. Al Leach was so busy trying to put out so many other fires that our fire just wasn't big enough. I say now we paid the price of not having a minister at the cabinet table. Because I've been there, I've sat at that table, and it makes a difference when you can say, "This is a priority and it has to be dealt with and this government has no right to ignore it," and you can do that at the cabinet table. We have paid a price over and over and over because we don't have anyone at the cabinet table representing our interests.

Don't talk to me about the minister from Burlington, because that's Burlington. We needed a Hamilton cabinet minister. That was the moment that Al Leach, on November 9, should have stood up and said, "On the basis of the agreement reached yesterday, I will introduce legislation to amend the Hamilton-Wentworth Act to ensure that the historical agreement reached will now be the law."

But that didn't happen. He dropped the ball and he let it go. It sat for weeks and months. Now what's happening is that the government, particularly the backbenchers — and maybe that's why the government is getting very nervous. They're very nervous because they're worried that this is going to come back to haunt them in the next election. And it will.

But in my opinion, as much as I support one tier and as much as I support the agreement of November 8, I don't believe this government has the moral authority to impose unilaterally a one-tier structure on our community, not after all we've been through, not so close to an election. You don't have that moral authority. Nowhere in the resolution does it say there has to be any local support — none.

Other members may get up and say you expect support from this quarter or from that quarter, but the fact is that this resolution does not say there needs to be some local support, none; it's a unilateral action. What does the member for Hamilton Mountain point to as his rightful

motivation for suggesting it doesn't need local support? He talks about the Metro model, Bill 103, and Bill 26, the most undemocratic — for those who don't know the numbers, that was the omnibus bill, that was the bully bill, that's the one where we had to hijack the bloody Legislature just to have some semblance of decent public input. That's also the bill that created the health restructuring commission that's now looking at shutting down hospitals in Hamilton. That's what the member for Hamilton Mountain says is his authority in terms of how this can be done and why it ought to be done, and in Metro, people are beside themselves that this government steamrollered that bill through.

Let's remember, for those backbenchers over there who are rolling their eyes and shaking their heads, the fact is that a few months before you introduced that Metro bill, your own government said: "That's not an idea we'd look at. We don't like that idea. That makes no sense." That became the law a few months later. You rammed that through.

Those are the two examples the member for Hamilton Mountain says give him the right to argue that his government ought to move now and unilaterally: the Metro model and the omnibus Bill 26. Isn't that special?

Let me tell you, member for Hamilton Mountain, in your resolution, when you say "since the region of Hamilton-Wentworth has been undergoing a restructuring exercise for the past three years without success," the only reason we didn't have success was because you and your government didn't do your part. We had success on November 8. Four out of six mayors, representing 90% of the population, signed on the line. Two opposition members, who have no interest in supporting you or this government if we can possibly avoid it, which is usually not difficult — it broke my heart that I would ever have to stand up and vote for a Tory-sponsored bill. It truly did, but the fact was that I felt there was enough legitimacy in that November 8 accord and enough need for a one-tier structure in our community that I would have done that. I said so publicly at the time, and I meant it.

You have created a different world from that, a completely different world. You've let so much time go by and there have been so many flip-flops, so many new ideas. There was even a little scheme hatched outside the doors right over there. I didn't know anything about that, but it was in the paper the next day. That was just one more little chapter in this huge volume you've written. Then the last-minute move by our member for Burlington to come in and try to structure some kind of magic bullet — that's a joke.

I have a great deal of trouble believing this is not just you positioning yourself politically so if the government does do this — I think you know what they're going to do; I think there's a good chance you know what the Minister of Municipal Affairs is going to do in this regard. If he is going to move you're going to try and take credit, for those who think this is a great idea, that you moved the minister. If he's not going to do it, you're covering your rear flanks by saying, "Hey, I tried."

Let me say to you in closing and to the government, you didn't try hard enough for our community. You had your chance. Unfortunately, you didn't just blow it for



yourselves, you blew for all of us in the community. But that does not give you the right to bring in a resolution asking this government to impose unilaterally, without any local support, a totally new form of government three bloody months before the election. You've got no moral authority to do that at all, and I will vote against this resolution and against the politics that are behind it.

1130

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** I'm pleased to rise in support of this resolution. Whatever conviction I had that it was the right thing has been further resolved by the comments of the member opposite. To think that he had endorsed a move that would effectively have resulted in exactly the same result, and now stands up today and suggests otherwise, is very typical.

To couch his comments in terms of Bill 26 in the doom and gloom that continues to be the litany of woe that comes from that side, I would remind people, as he reminded people, that was the bill they suggested would bring pestilence, famine and plague to this province, but which instead has been part of an economic turnaround that has created over 1,000 new full-time jobs a day; that has seen one company alone announce 5,000 new jobs; that has seen new home sales go up 60%; that has seen automotive sales at record levels. That's the result of Bill 26 and its companion pieces.

But let me get back to the resolution at hand here, because I don't think there is any doubt that whether it's Hamilton-Wentworth or any other municipality across this province, most reasonable municipal politicians have recognised (a) the responsibility they have to their taxpayers to find the most efficient, the most effective, the most appropriate means of delivering services, and (b) have recognized that we were serious in our campaign commitment to seek at municipal level, in addition to what we were doing ourselves at the provincial level, that those savings would come about in this term of office.

I'm pleased to report to you that as we stand here today, 71 proposals have been received by groups of municipalities across Ontario. The result so far, their voluntary efforts: 140 fewer communities coming up this fall when we go back to municipal elections and over 600 fewer municipal politicians. That's courage; that's foresight; that's respecting the needs of the taxpayers they represent.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, we've had a very different scenario. In 1974 when regional government was created, at the time it was appropriate, as it was in many parts of Ontario. It was one of 13 regional governments that were created to balance the diverse interests of rural and urban portions of the region, to provide for growth in a managed and truly controlled method. Quite frankly, it provided — for the population base to afford the upper-tier municipality — the revenues to be able to deliver some of the services we've all come to expect in this province. Certainly, looking back, those were wise decisions of the government of the day.

However, Hamilton and Toronto and some of those regions developed at a far faster rate than anyone could have ever anticipated when the regional governments were created. I would draw to your attention it was only four years later that the first of a number of reports was

produced showing that the regional government should be moved one step further and that one government be in place, one-tier level of municipal government across the entire region.

I could stand up here and regale you with details of that Stewart report or with the report done by the regional chair in 1988, the Task Force on Sustainable Development in 1993, the Whynott report in August 1994 and many other independently produced reports by the various municipalities or by the region, all of which came to the conclusion that moving to a single-tier government in Hamilton-Wentworth made sense.

To think we sit here today, 19 years later, after the very first report, and still have a municipality that has not taken the steps forward, I think it is quite appropriate for the member to have brought this resolution forward in the hope it will steel the resolve of the municipal politicians who, I might note — on November 8, last year, a majority of the mayors, mayors representing 88% of the population of the region — voted in favour of the report that would have seen a single integrated administrative structure for Hamilton-Wentworth.

Within a couple of weeks, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing did ask my colleague, the other parliamentary assistant for municipal affairs, Ernie Hardeman, to undertake a review of that report and move forward with terms of reference on how it could be turned into legislation.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the forum. They got cold feet down in Hamilton-Wentworth. In the context of all of those reports, and most damning, the final report of the constituent assembly that these same mayors had set up and had charged with the task of ascertaining what the public in Hamilton-Wentworth believed — let me just highlight a few of the details — was a single unified municipal council for the entire Hamilton-Wentworth community, community councils, single administration for the entire region, decentralized service delivery, benchmarking and best practices.

That's what the people of Hamilton-Wentworth said. That's what the voters that member opposite represents said. For all the damning that went on from that side about why we didn't — exactly that process here in Toronto, Bill 103, the answer being of course that municipal politicians here had wasted the first two years of their three-year mandate. There was no time. He now turns around and damns his own constituents for the conclusion that is represented by this resolution. I believe it's only appropriate we move forward. I support this resolution wholeheartedly.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** I rise, not as a member who comes from the Hamilton-Wentworth region, so I don't feel it's appropriate for me to enter into debate on the pros and cons of the history of the debate that's gone on in that area to attempt to reach a consensus on these very difficult issues of amalgamation and what form of governance is in the best interests of all the residents, all the citizens of a particular region.

The reason I rise to speak today is because I find it, as a parliamentarian, somewhat incredible that this resolution should be here at all, let alone that this resolution should be here on the very last day of the session of the



House. I speak to it because I see this as being a classic illustration of the way this entire government does business. I want to make just a couple of points about it.

First is that typically of this government, resolutions they'd rather that nobody noticed tend to be brought in under the cover of something else or at the very last minute in the hope that nobody will recognize that once again we have a government that is going to attempt to impose its will on the people of this province.

The government members will argue that there has indeed been a long history, a lot of time taken in an attempt to reach a consensus. The bottom line is there is not a full consensus on this issue yet, as both the member for Hamilton East and the member for Hamilton Centre have said, "This still constitutes a unilateral action by government and it is still action which is intended to shut down dissent."

Typical then that this government would bring it in on the last day of the session, just as they brought original bully Bill 26 under the cover of a budget debate and wanted it passed in the two weeks before Christmas; just like they brought in the draconian rule changes that are intended to shut down dissent in this place; just as this government wants to shut down dissent in the public forum; just as they brought those draconian rule changes in under cover of other things in the hope they could quickly get them through before the end of the session when nobody would be noticing.

This resolution, and the timing and the way it's been brought forward, is illustrative of this government's method of operation in another way. It's a classic illustration of the way they have decided to start using backbenchers to do the dirty work of government. If this government wants to force an amalgamation, they certainly have examples of how to do that. They have examples of how to do that in the amalgamation in Toronto where they rammed through that amalgamation in spite of the opposition of 72% of the population.

I guess they decided that they didn't want to be seen to be forcing another amalgamation on another region. I guess they didn't want to be too quick to get the tag of being bullying on amalgamation again. They'd just done Toronto; they'd just forced through the amalgamation of school boards in the province. It's a little bit heavy a record to add another one. What do they do? They have one of their backbenchers bring in a resolution so that then they can wash their hands of it. They're being urged to take action in Hamilton-Wentworth. They're being urged by one of their own members and a member from that area to take action. They will defend this on the grounds that this is about giving backbenchers more of a voice.

1140

I'm sure the member for Nepean who was the front man for the rules changes will argue that this is the kind of a voice backbenchers should have. If this is truly the voice of a backbencher, and if this government really doesn't want to have any part of unilaterally forcing amalgamation on another region, let them defeat the resolution, and then their member has had every chance to urge them to take unilateral action if that is what he wants and let the government defeat it. If the government

defeats it, then we will rise and say: "Maybe the government is going to back away. Maybe the government has learned its lessons. Maybe it's not going to force amalgamation on another region."

But I am pessimistic because we have seen in the last weeks the way in which this government is prepared to use a backbencher to do the dirty work for them. They didn't bring forward the rule changes themselves. They had the member for Nepean bring forward the rule changes. They had the member for Nepean out there saying that this is about increasing the amount of time for debate, when in fact we know that it is about ramming more legislation through in a hurry so that people in the public don't get a chance to voice their concerns, let alone people in this Legislature. That's what the rule changes were all about.

It wasn't about more time for debate, as the member for Nepean suggested. What the government wanted was to be able to ram through their legislation, and they used the member for Nepean as a backbencher to be able to carry it forward under the flag of more time for debate. Clearly this government doesn't want to be responsible for its bullying actions, the kind of bullying actions that we see in the rule change proposals, the kinds of unilateral actions against a region that we see urged in this resolution.

One of the rule changes is very relevant to the resolution that's before us today, because one of the rule changes will prevent opposition members from blocking a private member's bill. I expect the member for Nepean will say, "That's all about giving more support to private members so that they can bring forward their bills and not run the risk of opposition from 12 members of the House." In fact, what that rule change will do is make it even more easy for the government, give the government more scope to let private members do their dirty work for them with no opposition at all.

That may be the government's intention, to wash their hands of the responsibility for the next series of bullying actions they want to take, but they simply can't duck the responsibility. It will be the government's decision as to whether or not this motion passes. They have the majority. As with all things, the government, the cabinet, will dictate what it wants and we will see whether or not the majority government passes this resolution, just as it will be a decision of the government, not the backbenchers, not the member for Nepean, to impose rule changes on this assembly that will stifle debate and dissent.

It will be the government's decision as to whether or not they act on this motion. Private members' motions don't need to be carried forward by government. The member for Hamilton Mountain may wish to urge his government to take unilateral action. His government does not have to do that. The member for Nepean may say: "Well, these weren't really the government's rule changes. I really believe in this. I'm putting it forward." The government doesn't need to bring that forward as a bill. The government doesn't need to act on that. The decisions that are made in this place when you have a government with a majority are clearly the decisions of the government.



Make no mistake about it: If this resolution is passed today, if this resolution goes forward, it is because once again we have a government that is in a great hurry to ram its agenda through. It's not content with having forced its amalgamation on the Toronto municipalities this spring. It's not content with having brought about the broadest school board amalgamations that this province has ever seen this spring. It's going to force through another amalgamation on another region.

I fully appreciate that there has been a long history here. Reaching consensus on something as difficult as amalgamation, reaching consensus on something which is as gut-wrenching, as heart-wrenching, for citizens as altering their sense of community, their sense of involvement in community, takes a very long time.

It is sort of like, dare I say, hospital restructuring. Up in my community we worked for 10 years to bring about hospital restructuring, and the hospital restructuring commission came in with its unilateral powers to impose its will on our community and destroyed 10 years of work to get consensus on that issue in my community.

Yes, it takes a long time to get consensus, to get real consensus, to have citizen participation and involvement and to have citizens buy in. This government has no patience for that, no time for that at all. They believe it's okay as government, when you've got a majority and you've got an agenda, to go ahead with that agenda and to do it as fast as possible, because they've got a political imperative here. Their political imperative is to get all the dirty work done now. You're at the two-year mark. You want the next two years for appeasement, so you've got to do all the bullying now and get it done. You can't wait any longer for Hamilton-Wentworth. You can't wait any longer for consensus.

So they will act on this motion, I suspect. They will silence the opposition in Hamilton-Wentworth, just as they will move forward on their rule changes to silence opposition in this House and as they will continue to silence dissent in this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** This private member's motion is yet again another example of how the government is utilizing the private members' hour to basically do government business. This is not the first time the government has done this, and this is certainly, by the looks of it, not going to be the last.

We have to remember what this time is for. We have two hours every week to bring forward motions by individual members that deal with issues within their own ridings or deal with issues that are important to the constituents they represent. Arguably, you can say the member is from Hamilton, but the fact is that this government moved on the megacity madness, on Bill 103, last fall much to the opposition of not only the members of the opposition but most of the people in the city of Toronto, and this government did not want to be in the position of having to themselves impose legislation on the people of the cities in and around Hamilton.

What do they do? They get the private member to introduce a motion asking for it to be done so that if they do go ahead, they can say, "Oh, it wasn't us. It was the

member from Hamilton who made us do it," and they can hide behind this private member's bill.

In the 20 seconds I have left, I have to say to members of this assembly, members of the government, you have to stop utilizing private members' hour to be doing what is government business. You start doing that and it is a long, slippery slope where finally individual members of this assembly are going to start losing the rights that they have in this assembly to properly represent the constituents of their own ridings.

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** I'm pleased to rise and join in the debate on this private member's resolution. The opposition have raised a couple of issues with respect to the motivation for the member's resolution. It's my understanding that private members' time is exactly that: private members' time. It's for us to bring forward matters that we are concerned about, issues that we're concerned about and things that we hear in our communities and that we want to see changed.

I commend the member for Hamilton Mountain for bringing forward this resolution. He obviously is concerned about what's happening in our area, as I am.

There's not much time, but I want to tell people about Hamilton. We often hear derogatory comments about Hamilton, the steel city. I'm proud of Hamilton. I'm proud of the community that makes up Hamilton-Wentworth and I'm proud of the individuals who live in that community. I'm proud of our steel industry. I'm proud of the fact that we have looked to our community to come up with what we call Vision 2020, which looks at diversifying our community and making sure we have economic prospects in our community to make it a viable community on into the future. I think we all in Hamilton-Wentworth love our community and we all work hard for our community.

Hamilton has been acknowledged, as we've heard, by the United Nations for their Vision 2020. The constituent assembly report has been honoured with this latest award for their efforts in coming to a solution with respect to municipal restructuring. We have a lot to be proud of in Hamilton-Wentworth.

With respect to restructuring, we have a lot of history that goes back numerous years, as you've heard on reports that have been submitted. Every one of them except for one states that the only way for Hamilton-Wentworth to continue to be a viable economic community for its people is to restructure into a one-tier regional government — every report but one.

I listened to the member for Fort William, who says she is appalled that backbenchers are sent to do the dirty work of the government. I take real exception to that. Private members' resolutions do not impose anything on the government, they allow members to bring forward matters that concern them, so I take real exception to that.

1150

The member for Hamilton Centre said that restructuring has always been a focus of controversy in Hamilton-Wentworth, and indeed it has. He also mentioned, and so have the members for Hamilton East and Fort William, that they question the timing of this. I'll say to them that private members get to put their private members' bills



according to designated slots. Unfortunately, his bill came at this time. We, at the time his slot came, didn't even know we'd be sitting at this date. I think they should look at that as well.

With respect to what's going on in Hamilton-Wentworth, recently the Spectator conducted a poll on amalgamation and what people felt about amalgamation, what they were concerned about. Some 51% of the people were concerned about community. What does "community" mean? It doesn't mean a bunch of politicians sitting in a room. "Community" means people living together, neighbour to neighbour; people working together, helping each other, building families and homes. That's what community is all about; it's not about politicians in a room. So I take real exception to people saying, "I'm going to lose my local identity by this."

You know what? In Hamilton, we have numerous communities. We have Durand neighbourhood, we have Beasley, we have Westdale. Up in Hamilton West, we have Gourlay Park, Gilkison. They're all communities. They all come together in the end to form one local identity, what we keep intact, what matters to us most. I think that's what makes community. I don't think politicians make community.

Somebody talked about the flip-flops of this government on this issue. I say to them that the flip-flops have not happened here; they've happened at the local level. They've happened with politicians at the local level who didn't know where they wanted to go. We still don't have a combined effort from the regional politicians. We've got local interests saying, "We oppose this," but we don't have one combined. We've got a report that came forward that they all agreed to, but when there were amendments put forward, nobody agreed to the amendments. So what do we have? Nothing.

On April 7, what we do have from the city of Hamilton from committee of the whole is an agreement that they want an amalgamated tax base, representation by population, amalgamation of all area municipalities into the city of Hamilton. They want to eliminate the region and devolve all staff and services into the city of Hamilton. They want regional, one-tier government. I'm very much supportive of it. I can't say enough about the fact that I think it's unfortunate we didn't get a local solution. We would have all preferred a local solution. It's evident it's not happening, so I'm very much supportive of the resolution.

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I only have three minutes. Personally, this whole amalgamation debate has been a source of considerable pain to myself and to all members of the Hamilton community. When I ran for politics, there were two principles that I believed all governments should adhere to. I think we all should adhere to them, and it doesn't matter what party you're from. They are that government should be run in an efficient manner — run like a business is how we phrased it — and it should be done in a democratic fashion. It has been a source of pain to me that this has not occurred in Hamilton in this debate.

The constituent assembly report was referred to. The problem with the constituent assembly report is that attached thereto is a report from a chartered accounting firm that says you could save up to \$200 million but

without any breakdown of any kind on how it's going to be done. If you were in a business and you said, "Let's restructure," and you asked, "How much is it going to save us?" and they said, "Well, \$200 million," and you asked, "Where are the details?" and they said, "I don't have any," you wouldn't do it. So the regional council didn't do it.

Into this morass the government sent an individual named Gardner Church. It's interesting to note how he conducted himself. Bill 26 indicated that any restructuring had to be an open process, no private meetings allowed. In fact, section 55 of the Municipal Act says you can't have private meetings unless certain requirements are met, and they weren't met here. Church came in and he had private meetings right off the bat. He broke the minister's own guidelines. He broke the law. What did he do when he broke the law? What did he do in those private meetings? Mayor Wade — who is the most respectable, experienced, decent, honest mayor you could ever get; he's been in Ancaster forever, probably was there before Mr Laughren was here in the Legislature — said: "I had no choice but to sign it. They put a gun to my head."

This is the November 8 agreement we're talking about. Of the four out of six mayors who signed, three of them had the gun put to their head. Here we have laws broken, rules broken, guns to the head. Government like a business? Business is not a Mafia; that's what this business sounded like. There was no costing of any kind.

The key part of the November 8 agreement was that we were going to save \$30 million. The question was asked, "Where did \$30 million come from?" Don't forget, it was \$200 million to be saved just months earlier in the constituent assembly report. All the mayors said, "We don't know." The figure was pulled out of the air. Could you imagine going to a private company and saying, "Let's restructure," and asking, "How much is it going to save?" and they say, "Well, \$30 million," and you ask, "Where did you get that figure from?" and they say, "Alchemy; I pulled it out of the air." You would never restructure in the private sector on that basis.

We did have a local solution. All six councils voted on it. This is totally contrary to that. If this resolution passes, democracy in Ontario does not mean anything.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Hamilton Mountain, you have two minutes.

**Mr Pettit:** So much to say in so little time. I'd like to thank the members for Cochrane South, Hamilton East, Hamilton Centre, Scarborough East, Hamilton West, Wentworth North and Fort William. I find the comments from the member for Fort William somewhat insulting, but we've come to get used to that from a member who obviously still can't rein in and conceal her bitterness over the results of the last provincial election.

To the members for Hamilton East and Hamilton Centre, I say that I agree that the plan back in November should have been implemented. It was never explained to us why it wasn't.

To those who say this is political opportunism in the timing, I should remind them that I wrote to the Premier in March of this year proposing exactly what I am proposing today, and they never did tell us why they didn't.

There has been nothing said to sway me in any of the arguments that were presented. The people of Hamilton-Wentworth are all one people. We all go to the Binbrook Fair, we all go to the Ancaster Fair, we all go to Hamilton Place, we go to Stoney Creek Flag Day, we go to the cactus festival in Dundas or the Rockton Fall Fair up in Flamboro.

It's very easy for the member for Wentworth North to say there was a local solution. But he sat down all those who were opposed to the one tier in order to come up with that solution, so that's very simple right there.

In closing, I'd like to say that what divides us are artificial political boundaries and the local politicians. They don't create community identity and they don't create community spirit; the people do. I believe it's time for leadership. Leadership is not taking a position, leadership is taking action, and the time for action is now. If not now, when? If not by the provincial government, then by whom?

### UNION FEES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We'll deal first with ballot item number 87. If there are any members in the chamber opposed to taking a vote on this at this time, they will please rise.

Mr Fox has moved private member's notice of motion number 58.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The vote will be deferred.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 88. If there are any members opposed to taking a vote on this at this time, will they please rise.

Mr Pettit has moved private member's notice of motion number 59.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the resolution carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be deferred as well.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.*

### UNION FEES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Fox has moved private member's notice of motion number 58. All those in favour please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Skarica, Toni
Boushy, Dave	Hastings, John	Spina, Joseph
Carr, Gary	Johns, Helen	Stewart, R. Gary
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Doyle, Ed	Klees, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne

Flaherty, Jim  
Fox, Gary  
Galt, Doug  
Gilchrist, Steve

Leadston, Gary L.  
Pettit, Trevor  
Ross, Lillian  
Sheehan, Frank

Wood, Bob  
Young, Terence H.

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Martin, Tony
Boyd, Marion	Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Miclash, Frank
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Castrilli, Annamaria	Kormos, Peter	Pouliot, Gilles
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Silipo, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Tilson, David
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	Laughren, Floyd	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 25; the nays are 32.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the resolution lost. There will be a pause for 30 seconds.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Pettit has moved private member's notice of motion number 59. All those in favour please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Boushy, Dave	Newman, Dan	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Chudleigh, Ted	Pettit, Trevor	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Ross, Lillian	Young, Terence H.
Hastings, John	Spina, Joseph	
Leadston, Gary L.	Tascona, Joseph N.	

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Duncan, Dwight	Martel, Shelley
Baird, John R.	Fox, Gary	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	McLeod, Lyn
Boyd, Marion	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Miclash, Frank
Bradley, James J.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Murdoch, Bill
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Carr, Gary	Johns, Helen	Pouliot, Gilles
Castrilli, Annamaria	Kells, Morley	Sheehan, Frank
Christopherson, David	Klees, Frank	Silipo, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Skarica, Toni
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Stewart, R. Gary
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wildman, Bud
Crozier, Bruce	Lankin, Frances	Wood, Len
Curling, Alvin	Laughren, Floyd	
Doyle, Ed	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 13; the nays are 43.



**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the resolution lost.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, I do now leave the chair. This House will resume at 1:30.

*The House recessed from 1212 to 1332.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### PRIDE WEEK

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I rise today as the Liberal Party's human rights critic to recognize Pride Week and the significant contributions made to our society by the gay and lesbian community.

In my riding of Ottawa Centre, gays and lesbians have always been a strong and vibrant force in all aspects of community life. They are an anchor in keeping a good part of our downtown safe, healthy and livable. Their battles for acceptance and equality have been hard fought and hard won, and they still have a way to go.

Ontario's laws still discriminate against same-sex couples in many areas such as employment benefits, ability to make decisions on behalf of children or loved ones who are unable to consent to treatment, mourning rites for deceased partners, and inheritance rights.

The chief Ontario Human Rights Commissioner has called on the Ontario government to revise 16 laws which violate the rights of gays and lesbians. I support his move, as I'm sure many in this House do as well.

Gay pride as we know it stems from a particularly ugly incident in 1969 in New York City where gays were viciously attacked. Regrettably, discrimination based on sexual orientation still is with us and exists, and regrettably, so does the violence that all too often accompanies it.

Pride Week is an important celebration for many gays and lesbians in many communities. Today in Toronto, Pride Week is one of the largest cultural events in North America. This year marks its 17th anniversary.

Gays and lesbians are people from all walks of life: they are our friends, our neighbours, our coworkers and our family. Please join with me in recognizing Pride Week and in working towards balancing the inequality that exists —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** The St Catharines long-term-care office has served the Niagara region in an exemplary fashion. It's resolved difficult health care issues with skill and sensitivity. That office has had a strong, involved presence in Niagara Peninsula communities, which has made for good communication with service providers and consumers.

Reminiscent of this government's attack on the family support plan, 14 area offices providing long-term care in their respective areas are being abandoned, to be substituted by five regional offices serving and monitoring 1,700 long-term-care agencies. After the family support plan decentralization fiasco this government should think

twice about removing valued services from the communities that need them.

This move will prove more costly at the end of the day. This move will subject those in need of the services provided by these long-term-care offices to abandonment and in fact deny them the services that are rightly theirs. It will affect the ability of long-term-care staff to effectively monitor and supervise the long-term-care providers who are available to clientele across the province.

I want to join people in Niagara in condemning this Soviet centralization, "Bigger is better," on the part of the Tories —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much.

### TOWN OF PERTH

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** This year, Canadian Living magazine challenged readers to write and tell them why their home town was the best in the country. Entries and nominations poured in from young and old, ranging from the best place to raise a family to the best place to retire.

Today I wish to inform all members in the House that the town of Perth in the county of Lanark was selected as the number one community for retirement in Canada. For Mrs Betty Rapkins of Perth, who sent in the winning entry, Perth is number one for many reasons. She said Perth has food and housing at a reasonable price, excellent health care, a fine hospital and doctors, and is a town where you can sing, dance, act, quilt, curl, hike, or play golf on one of Canada's oldest golf courses, Links O'Tay.

Perth is a community for all seasons and generations. There are endless types of recreation, ranging from swimming in a modern indoor pool to being able to fish or boat in over 100 lakes within a 50-mile radius. Winter activities range from travelling the hundreds of miles of snowmobile trails around the region, to the annual Festival of the Maples.

Perth is vibrant, full of life and community spirit. I would suggest to all members of the House that they take some time and visit this heritage town during the summer recess. I know you won't be disappointed.

### SAFETY BARRIER

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** On August 26, 1996, a runaway gravel truck crossed Steeles Avenue at the exit ramp from the 404 and smashed into a town house, killing May Wong and injuring her two sons. Residents in the area have been living in fear ever since; living in fear that another truck will overshoot the same busy exit ramp, causing more damage and more deaths.

For months, the local residents have been demanding that the government build a retaining wall around this ramp to protect them. Local Meadoway resident Mary-Jane Rose has led the fight since last September to get a commitment to action from Minister of Transportation. But it's now more than eight months since the minister wrote to former Oriole MPP Elinor Caplan promising he would act quickly.



Since that time, specific promises of protective structures have been made only to be delayed and delayed. Today, almost a year after the original death, the minister's promises of quick action have become a farce. The people of the Meadoway community are still waiting and are still wondering when the next truck will overshoot the ramp.

Recently, local school trustee David Caplan has also been active on the issue, working with the Meadoway residents to get the minister to honour his commitment to plan to begin construction. David Caplan has spoken to me on behalf of the local residents asking that we remind the minister in the Legislature of his promise. How long will the people of Meadoway have to wait before this government agrees —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you.

### CANCER PREVENTION

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a letter which later I will be sending over to the health and environment ministers. It reads:

"Dear Minister:

"You will be aware that on April 18, 1996, the Ontario Legislature passed my resolution which committed the government to phase out the emission of environmental carcinogens. This resolution came directly from a comprehensive report on cancer prevention undertaken by a former Minister of Health, Ruth Grier.

"Since that time I have tried repeatedly to meet you and the Minister of Environment, to no avail.

"This coming July 13-17, Kingston is hosting the World Conference on Breast Cancer. A full day of the conference has been set aside for discussing prevention/environment and I will be attending that session. I'm sure you would agree that it would be a perfect occasion to be able to announce that legislators of all three parties are working together to carry out this resolution and that we are taking some leadership in the area of cancer prevention.

"Minister, I am asking you today to meet with me so we can begin the process of ridding our environment — and our bodies — of carcinogens and other environmental toxins.

"Thank you in advance for agreeing to make this happen."

Cancer claims over 20,000 lives every year in Ontario, and by now we have enough evidence to know that some of these carcinogens are causing damage to the immune, neurological and reproductive systems.

1340

### ONTARIO CHORAL FEDERATION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** In my riding of Durham East, music is a universal language that unites individuals across geographic and cultural boundaries.

The Ontario Choral Federation, which last year celebrated its silver anniversary, has been an active participant in the global musical community. For a quarter-century, the foundation has linked Ontarians with others around the world who share a passion for choirs and choral music.

It has introduced young people to this great artistic tradition, creating the Ontario Youth Choir in 1971. Since its inception, the choir has trained more than 500 young singers.

The foundation's extensive musical library and programs serve more than 14,000 people and contribute significantly to Ontario's musical legacy. Moreover, the foundation's special events do more than showcase local and international talent. They also generate economic activity for the province.

Much of the foundation's success is due to the hard work and creativity of its members and volunteers. Their time and expertise, given freely, have enriched the lives of choral music fans and practitioners far beyond the boundaries of their organization.

Our government knows that when it comes to a healthy community, a vibrant volunteer sector is just as important as the public and private sectors. The Ontario Choral Federation's many years of service are a testament to the volunteer spirit and a source of inspiration for all of us.

### TVONTARIO

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** Earlier today, Privatization Minister Rob Sampson and Culture Minister Marilyn Mushinski announced that TVOntario has been referred to the Office of Privatization for a review of the role of the provincial government in educational broadcasting.

Unfortunately, I understand that Minister Sampson has decided to insult the members of the Legislature and the people of Ontario by not also making this announcement in the Legislature today. However, on behalf of the Ontario Liberal caucus, I believe a response to this major announcement is not only in order but of grave importance.

Ontario Liberals believe that TVO best serves the people of Ontario as a public asset. We made our position clear in this matter earlier this year and we strongly maintain that belief.

The people of Ontario have also put their support behind TVOntario. Public opinion surveys confirm that a strong majority of Ontarians oppose the potential privatization of TVO. Thousands of people from all across the province have expressed their support for our publicly funded network by sending in petitions en masse.

However, in that the government has now decided to begin this privatization review, let me be very clear about how this process must work. I know the minister is listening. We urge the government to conduct open and honest public consultation across the province. We have seen more than one example of this government going against the public will. Therefore, all of us must be diligent to ensure that the public is heard and listened to.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I'm very concerned about the announcement that was made today that TVOntario is being made the test case of the privatization commission.

I want to say to the ministers, when you launched your privatization framework you said two questions must always be asked: (1) Is there a way to improve service to the public? (2) Does it increase value to the taxpayer?



These two goals don't recognize that TVO may be damaged by the process, regardless of the outcome.

TVOntario will be the guinea pig for your framework. It may also be the victim. Your government's bottom-line mentality doesn't value the intangible assets of TVO: educational, award-winning television that is violence-free and commercial-free.

The privatization process threatens TVO's essential services to northern and native communities and TFO, the French network. Will these services survive the privatization process or will they too fall victim to this government's hurried incompetence?

Will the public have a say? Will you listen to what they have to say? Will you listen to the people who work at TVO and TFO?

Today this government is one step closer to snatching TVO out of the hands of Ontarians and handing it over to the highest bidder. I urge the public to get involved. Come forward and defend TVO. Tell the commission that TVO matters. Show the commission that it is not in the public interest to sell off or commercialize TVO.

#### AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today as the member for Scarborough Centre in order to recognize June as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month.

Since 1990, the month of June has been recognized as ALS Awareness Month. The ALS Society of Canada has been running a flower day in June for many years now to raise funds for the fight against this disease. As well, Lou Gehrig, one of baseball's all-time greatest players, retired from baseball in June and died of ALS in June 1941.

The ALS Society of Canada was incorporated in 1977 as a non-profit charitable organization devoted exclusively to people with ALS, to funding research into the causes of ALS, to develop educational materials and to promote public awareness of the disease. The ALS Society raises funds through donations for research to find a cure and to meet the needs of people with ALS and those who care for them until a cure is found.

In 1995, the flower awareness days campaign raised almost \$222,000. In 1996, over \$220,000 was raised. Every Ontarian's generosity will ensure that the 1997 totals are even greater. All the money raised goes directly to research and represents the single greatest source of funds for research into this deadly disease.

I'd ask every member in this House to join me in recognizing the efforts of the ALS Society and its volunteers and in supporting the society in its fight against this terrible disease.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise to request unanimous consent. As you know, this weekend is the celebration of Gay Pride Day and there will be many events across the province. I would like to ask unanimous consent for the three caucuses to speak for a few minutes to the celebration of Gay Pride Day.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** The member for Beaches-Woodbine is seeking unanimous consent for comments. Agreed? I heard a no.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### MINISTRY BUSINESS PLANS

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I am pleased to table in this Legislature the government's business plans for all of its ministries.

These plans review last year's accomplishments and provide a road map to direct the public service for the coming year. They demonstrate the government's commitment to provide effective and cost-efficient services. Together they constitute a very thorough report to the public.

We are determined to provide Ontarians with better government.

These plans make government more cost-effective, open and accountable. These plans enable the people of Ontario to judge the effectiveness of government operations and our ability to serve Ontarians.

This government recognizes that the dollars we spend belong to taxpayers. It's our job to be accountable for spending this money wisely.

The year 1996 marked the first time that all Ontario ministries published business plans. These plans marked a new approach to public accountability.

This year we are providing plans which more clearly enable the public to gauge the value ministries are providing for tax dollars. Ministries are responsible for achieving the objectives they have set. They are accountable to the public for getting results. We want results for every tax dollar.

The government is committed to strengthening business planning across the Ontario public service. Next year it is our intention to bring greater efficiency to this process by tabling business plans as annual reports. Business plans are clearer, more precise and more informative. They commit ministries to get results.

This year, to make this information more accessible, we have produced a brochure for the public titled *Making Progress, Managing Change: A Report to Ontario Taxpayers*.

The individual business plans are intended for anyone who wishes to examine ministry operations in detail. We are committed to fuller and more open communication with the public on ministry operations.

These business plans and this brochure show that we have made solid progress over the past year. Our plan is working. We are investing in priority services; maintaining safe and secure communities; cutting taxes to create jobs; and making government work for people. We have mapped out solid accomplishments. We have outlined targets we intend to achieve. We have stated how we intend to measure our results.

I want to emphasize that we will continue to move forward by listening to taxpayers and putting our efforts into programs that benefit the public. We will continue to share our results and our plans for the future.



1350

## MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Today I am pleased to introduce legislation which deals with the administrative, technical and specific transitional matters around the move to one city of Toronto.

This bill would ensure that the day-to-day services people use and expect will still be in place when the new city of Toronto comes into being on January 1, 1998.

First, our bill would ensure that important local boards and commissions continue to exist and function just as they always have. These boards include the TTC, the Canadian National Exhibition, the zoo and the Hummingbird Centre. No changes.

Second, our bill would simply continue the services currently available to all residents of Metropolitan Toronto. In other words, the new city would be legally authorized, as its predecessors were, to provide ambulance services, operate the Toronto Islands ferry, regulate street vending, police Toronto harbour, operate homes for the aged, plan and act in emergencies and so on.

These are not new powers. They are a continuation of the powers currently afforded Metro council, powers which would simply allow the new city to carry out its responsibilities as residents expect.

A third aspect of this bill deals with protecting pensions and benefits of municipal and local board employees and retirees. There is no question that these obligations should continue to be honoured by the new city.

Our bill would also deal with specific transitional issues. For example, it will allow official plans of former municipalities to continue until such time as a new council wishes to adopt a new plan. It would also merge existing health, library and historical boards as well as parking authorities to ensure a more cohesive service structure is in place for residents.

Last but not least, our bill would permit the new council, if it wishes, to examine the financial picture and service levels in existing municipalities and take steps to address any imbalances. For example, the new council could designate reserve funds to be used to benefit taxpayers in the area where they were raised. That seems only fair to me, as I'm sure it does to everyone else.

In conclusion, let me say that this bill is largely operational in nature, but necessary for the new city to be completely operational on January 1, 1998. It would allow residents peace of mind, knowing that their city is in control, that it has the authority to carry on routine duties, and that we're all on the way to a more efficient, effective and less costly government structure.

## FARM PRACTICES PROTECTION

### PROTECTION DES PROCÉDURES AGRICOLES

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I am pleased to announce to the members of this House that today the government is

delivering on its promise to strengthen protection for farmers using normal farm practices.

This proposed Act to Protect Farming and Food Production is a crucial piece of legislation for farmers since it sets out to protect their ability to produce an ample supply of safe, reliable food that is enjoyed not only in Ontario, but around the world. We need to provide this protection to ensure the agrifood industry continues to be a major economic engine in this province.

The agrifood industry contributes \$25 billion a year to the provincial economy. It is the second-largest employer in the province and continues to create jobs and increase wealth through growing exports. Our farmers are the producers of the raw materials that feed our population and play a key role in keeping our economy running. Farmers need assurances that they can conduct their business and produce food without nuisance lawsuits or without facing unnecessarily restrictive bylaws.

The legislation I am introducing today provides that protection. Farmers and municipal leaders have told us that the current legislation, which is almost 10 years old, no longer reflects the needs of Ontario's growing rural population or its food producers.

Par conséquent, grâce aux mesures législatives que nous déposons aujourd'hui, nous proposons un équilibre entre le droit des agriculteurs de mener leurs affaires et les droits de l'ensemble des résidents de nos collectivités rurales.

The legislation I am tabling here today is the result of an extensive, province-wide consultation process which included more than 1,000 rural residents including farmers, rural municipal leaders and other rural stakeholders.

I would like to thank my colleagues the member for Hastings-Peterborough, Harry Danford, parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the former parliamentary assistant, the member for Lambton, Marcel Beaubien, who led the consultation process and worked with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and many of the farm commodity groups.

We have with us today farm leaders from across Ontario with us in the east gallery and I would like them to stand up and be recognized.

Our guiding principle throughout the review of the act has been to strengthen the protection of farming and food production while keeping it in harmony with health, safety and the environment. It is our intention to reinforce agriculture and food production as a provincial interest while balancing the needs of the rural community.

Let me briefly outline some of the changes that are being proposed: We would provide farmers who are carrying out normal farm practices protection from municipal bylaws that restrict farm practices. Under this proposed protection, farmers would be allowed to apply to a new Normal Farm Practices Protection Board for a ruling on a specific farm practice. If the board rules that the farm practice is normal, the bylaw would not apply in that case.

Nous avons l'intention de nommer à la nouvelle commission un plus grand nombre de représentants des



municipalités rurales. Ce changement aidera à assurer une approche équilibrée en ce qui touche le règlement des différends et à faire en sorte que les droits de l'ensemble de la population des régions rurales soient pris en considération.

In addition, prior to implementation, the ministry, in partnership with the OFA, the CFFO and ROMA would launch an education and awareness campaign to inform potential rural property purchasers, real estate agents, farmers and municipalities about the normal farming practices used in that area.

In summary, our proposed Act to Protect Farming and Food Production is proof of this government's serious and sincere commitment to a growing agrifood sector and to the farmers who contribute so much to the rural economy of this way of life. Let us never forget when agriculture succeeds, all of Ontario benefits.

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if I could have unanimous consent to allow the minister for privatization to make a statement on his wrongheaded attempt to review TVO for privatization.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** You know something? That means — I'll ask. Unanimous consent for the minister for privatization —

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker:** I've got to ask — to make a statement. Agreed? No.

Responses. Official opposition.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** On behalf of the Liberal Party, to the minister, we support the principle of updated legislation because of the ever-increasing clashes between rural and urban populations. Along with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and many of the farm commodity groups, we agree that this bill is expected to expand the farmers' ability to continue normal farming practices.

We look forward to debating the bill and certainly support it in principle. We look forward to the introduction of the bill and subsequent debate during readings. I will quote our agricultural critic, Pat Hoy, in saying, "Increasingly, the urban person is being put into the farmer's workplace," and we hope this legislation will help farmers deal with that problem.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Just to respond to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the minister is telling everybody, "Don't worry, everything's cool, everything's under control." It's just like the minister telling the homeowner whose house has been bulldozed, "It's okay, we didn't touch your back porch and your front garden is okay." In the statement he says, "By the way, the Hummingbird Centre won't be altered in its operation and also the zoo is going to remain the same," yet he has wiped away cities like Scarborough, which is over 200 years old, with his bulldozer.

Everything isn't okay. The two and a half million people in Metro Toronto are in turmoil because of your recklessness. They don't know whether they're coming or

going. For instance, in taxes, with your downloading of social services, your downloading of roads, they don't know what their taxes are going to be. With your new market value assessment system they don't know what their taxes are going to be.

With all the other measures that you're doing daily, you have created the fourth- and fifth-largest governments in Canada in the last couple of months. People don't know who to call because of all the confusion and the turmoil you're causing. New taxes, new governments, new education system — what are the tax impacts of that going to be? There's so much fear and trepidation out there because you refuse to listen and slow down.

Why don't you finally admit that there are huge problems with trying to do this overnight to 2.5 million people. The pity was that this was cited as the most successful city in the world to live in and the minister has just bulldozed it. It's like bulldozing that house again. Just because you had a problem with the plumbing in the sink, you bulldozed the house.

1400

#### MINISTRY BUSINESS PLANS

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I received with interest the report proposed by the government for their government business plans. I would just caution the Chairman of Management Board that when he says "better government," it doesn't necessarily mean that cheaper government gives you better government. I would hope that this minister and this government would certainly not fall to those who say, "If you only ran this government like a business, everything would be fine." We have obligations, we have responsibilities.

Today the minister for privatization talked about the possibility of privatizing TVO. There's no question, if you want to be really efficient, shut it right down, but that is not the role of government. The government has a role to play to provide essential services, cultural services, things for the people of Ontario that may not necessarily be cost-effective.

Without question, I think taxpayers have to get value for their dollars, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the dollar dictates what happens. We have crises in education and health care that are all predicated on your particular desire to give those people who least need it tax cuts without concern for what is happening as a result of that.

I would caution you again that when we talk about efficiencies and when we talk about effectiveness, we make sure that the citizens of Ontario are not being shortchanged so that they are not getting the things that make this jurisdiction the kind of a place that it is. Notwithstanding all of your efforts, it's quite interesting to note that the major credit rating agencies still do not consider the credit rating of Ontario better than it was when you railed against the previous government for their total ineptitude in managing this economy.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I first want to respond to the Chair of Management Board and his announcement about the business plans today and really I have a series of questions.



Is it part of the business plan, for example, in the Ministry of Attorney General to shut down the family support plan and create chaos out there for women and children across the province? Is that part of the business plan? Is it part of the business plan to turn the legal aid plan upside down and inside out, so that we have all sorts of unjust results happening in our courts across the province, people who need representation who can't get representation? Is it part of the business plan in the Ministry of Attorney General to literally turn our family courts inside out so that in case after case across this province we have women who cannot get legal representation, who are forced to go to court, to act on their own behalf, and the result is again unjust result after unjust result?

Is it part of the Ministry of Natural Resources' business plan to so reduce the number of firefighters in the province and the number of forward fire attack bases that we literally had a crisis in our forests earlier this spring? Yet at the same time the Ministry of Natural Resources is having to put some firefighters, who used to stay at forward attack bases, up in hotels at \$60 and \$70 a night and, in some cases, in resorts at \$90 and \$100 a night. Is this part of the business plan?

Is it part of the business plan to shut down the forward fire attack bases that are in the critical areas where we know from historical evidence we're likely to have forest fires, but maintain fire attack bases in the Minister of Finance's riding and in the Minister of Natural Resources' riding where history shows we never have forest fires? That must have been part of the business plan as well.

Then there is health care. Was it part of the business plan to create chaos in our hospitals across this province? Was it part of the business plan to lay off 11,000 badly needed nurses and health care workers? Was it part of the business plan to create longer lists for surgery, longer waiting lists than ever before?

Then there is Comsoc. Was it part of the business plan of this government to increase the number of children living in poverty virtually every day that this government is the government? Is it part of the business plan of this government to cut so much from children's aid society budgets that children's aid societies across this province are faced with growing waiting lists of children who need protection, children who are at risk or children who need help? Was that part of the business plan too?

Was it part of the business plan to take so much from the Ministry of Environment and Energy that the Environmental Commissioner issues a report saying that we are headed in the direction of an environmental crisis? Was that part of the business plan?

#### FARM PRACTICES PROTECTION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Now I want to move to the Minister of Agriculture. I want to say to the minister, I share your goals. I agree that farmers and the work that farmers do is very valuable for this province and that work needs to be protected, but what you have really done, if you put it all together, is put the cat among the pigeons.

Your government has virtually done away with land use planning legislation. You have given an open invitation to developers to move into rural Ontario wherever they can make a buck, or a bigger buck, and try to set up shop. You have set up, by removing those land use protections, the inevitable conflict between developers who want to make money and farmers who want to farm. That conflict is going to get worse by what you've done to the farm tax rebate.

You have set up a situation where there is going to be inevitable conflict between rural residents who don't farm and farmers, because rural residents are going to become increasingly jealous of farmers, who have a slightly lower tax rate. You are setting up more and more conflicts between rural residents and farmers. This is a good attempt but if you measure this good attempt against everything else that you've tried to, it's not going to work.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Time only allows me to say that the Minister of Municipal Affairs shouldn't be making the statement that he is today. He should be tendering his resignation.

#### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to raise a point of privilege with you and I want to say at the outset that this is not intended to rehash what happened here yesterday nor indeed should it be construed as a challenge to your ruling, but I hope you will grant me some latitude in making my point.

Yesterday the Integrity Commissioner reported that a minister of the crown, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, was found in violation of the Members' Integrity Act and in flagrant violation of parliamentary convention. The Members' Integrity Act, as you know, under section 34 requires the members of the assembly to consider the report and to report within 30 days. Your ruling yesterday indicated — and by the way, we accept the ruling entirely — that 30 days meant 30 calendar days and that what we engaged in yesterday was neither a consideration nor indeed a report to this assembly on the substantive merits of the report.

The proceedings of this House are due to adjourn this afternoon and come back on August 18. The legislation is clear: We have 30 calendar days to consider and report. Simple math will tell you that the period between now and August 18 exceeds 30 days. The point I wish to make is simply this: We have now had a minister of the crown who has broken the law. We, as members of the assembly, wish to be within the confines of the Members' Integrity Act. We do not wish, I do not wish, to break the law because of the adjournment of this House.

What I would ask you to rule on and give us some guidance on is how we as members of this assembly can fulfil our obligations under the legislation, the Members' Integrity Act, how we can avoid breaking the law in the event that this matter is not dealt with today and the House does not reconvene before August 18.



**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I think I dealt with that part of the issue yesterday. To simply clarify, there are many avenues available for the government to live within the law that's set out. I expressed at the time that that was just day one, and today happens to be day two, so it would be premature and it would be conjecture on my part to even begin to determine how they should handle the situation since they call the order of the business for this House. So at this point in time I don't think I need add any more than that, except to tell you that I addressed it yesterday, and again, it's a decision that will be taken by the government House leader, as I expressed in my response. Beyond that, there is little more I can add at this time.

1410

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Yesterday, you tabled the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 1996-97. In perusing them, I notice that all but six members of the two opposition parties overspent their allotments. The allotment that all members are given is \$201,084. All but six of the opposition members spent over that \$201,084. I was wondering if you would give —

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** That's not true.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** That is not correct.

**The Speaker:** Member for Kitchener, what I need to know is what you're driving at in your point of order.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** I was wondering if you could give the members here an undertaking that you will review why the overexpenditures were made and if you could report back to us, because this is an abuse of our privilege.

**The Speaker:** Member for Kitchener, I would just say that this is not a point of order, and —

**Mr Wettlaufer:** Point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** It's not a point of privilege either, and I have no interest —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** What it is is a cheap shot. That's what it is.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I have no interest in beginning to jump in and start measuring members' expenditures, office by office. Therefore, I will not give you any undertaking that I will report back, and in fact it's not a point of privilege or a point of order.

*Interjections.*

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I believe that incorrect information was provided to the members of the Legislative Assembly which accuses a number of members of the opposition, and by virtue of his reference and the numbers he used, one could go through and see exactly who he is accusing. I believe the facts he has put forward are incorrect, and I think the privileges of all those opposition members have therefore been abridged as a result of that. I would just ask the member to withdraw it. Perhaps he would like to check his facts, and at another time, if there's an appropriate point of order, you'll entertain it. But he should check his facts.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** On a point of order —

**The Speaker:** You know what, member for Lake Nipigon? It's on the same point of order. Let me say this

clearly. That was an opinion or a fact or however the member for Kitchener offered it.

**Ms Lankin:** It was an allegation.

**The Speaker:** It's an allegation the member for Kitchener made.

**Mr Wildman:** Unfounded.

**The Speaker:** Again, that's just a difference of opinion.

**Ms Lankin:** No, it's not.

**Mr Wildman:** No, it isn't.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** He's wrong.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Hamilton East, that's out of order and you're going to have to withdraw that, so you should go back to your seat and we'll deal with that right now. You've got to do it from your own seat.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** What we have is that they are points of privilege. The member for Kitchener is the only member who can withdraw what he said or correct his record. You cannot do that for him. So it's left at that.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** I have a question for the Minister of Health. You heard yesterday from the Integrity Commissioner, who was called upon by me to do a job that basically should have been done by the Minister of Health.

When the minister set up the hospital restructuring commission, known across the province as the hospital destructuring commission, which is causing fear and concern on the part of all manner of towns and cities in this province, it was presented to the public as independent. It was given authoritarian powers, and at the very same time we see now that the façade has fallen down.

We now know that this commission has been compromised. It has been compromised by the access of ministers of the crown to the commission when there should not have been. Minister, you have a damaged commission that is out there closing hospitals, subject to influence from cabinet, subject perhaps to other influences — we don't know. Will you recognize that your commission is compromised and will you withdraw it from its mandate today?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** I appreciate the question from the honourable member. There's no indication in the report from Mr Justice Gregory Evans that the commission has been compromised. I know the commission itself would reject any suggestion from anybody that there was political interference in their decisions. They are too professional to allow this to influence their decisions. The honourable members who did write — and that includes members of all parties. Those letters are public. They're part of the public record and the decision-making of the commission.

I will say that one of the reasons the Attorney General is seeking clarification is — the honourable member will note a section in the report which says the Minister of



Health should be the adjudicator of these matters. I think we want to clarify that, because certainly the Minister of Health has to be at arm's length to this commission and yet the report seems to indicate that members should come to me and I should go to the commission. We'd certainly like to clarify that with the Integrity Commissioner, because it doesn't seem to be totally correct.

**Mr Kennedy:** What we are looking for is for the Minister of Health to be the Minister of Health. You had an opportunity before this was brought to the Integrity Commissioner. We asked you for your ruling on this and you said to this House that anyone in Ontario was welcome to go to the commission.

Minister, you've been told that not only were you wrong in your management of the commission, wrong in the way you presented yourself to this House; the Integrity Commissioner on page 7 of his report says you should have told the ministers that they could not apply directly to the commission, just like they could to any other commission in the province.

You have a commission that is affecting the lives of sick people in this province, of all of us in this province, and that commission has been compromised by the access of ministers, by the way you've conducted yourself as Minister of Health.

Will you table today all the contact, all the letters that have been made by yourself and by your ministerial colleagues to this commission and will you conduct some form of public inquiry about how this has been made to come about?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** Any letters to the commission are certainly accessible by the public. If the commission, because it is in a process, doesn't release those at this time — they are the property of the commission — they will certainly be able to do so under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. It is part of the public record and part of their decision-making.

The honourable member points to page 7 of the report, and I'd indicate, also on page 7, that the *modus operandi* everyone was operating under in this province is exactly what I've said for months, and that is that the commission itself invited anyone to make representations. Mr Justice Gregory Evans points that out. That is what honourable members were operating under.

I said many times in this House that anyone is able to make submissions. We've been very honest and forthright. The honourable members clearly were under the impression that they could make submissions as MPPs. We've had a ruling from the commissioner that we stand by and we're looking for further clarification in his discussions with the Attorney General.

1420

**Mr Kennedy:** The minister does not accurately represent what the Integrity Commissioner said. He points to the defence that Minister Leach offers and says this is inadequate, that this should not have been done and particularly should not have been done by the Minister of Health, that recommendation to go directly to the commission.

We spoke to the commission and we asked them on May 28, "Have any ministers contacted you, any other people besides Mr Leach?" and they said no.

The integrity of your commission is now suspect, and it's suspect by your actions because you inadequately defended them. It says in the report that bungling doesn't have to lead to a penalty "unless there are extenuating circumstances." Well, Minister, there has been bungling, the bungling is on your part, and the extenuating circumstance is that hospitals are being closed by a commission that is compromised.

You should withdraw that commission from its mandate and you should encourage your colleague Minister Leach to resign so at least there can be an appearance of propriety on the part of your government. Will you do that today?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** To call into question the work done by the commission is truly unfair of the honourable member. It calls into question the experts, of whom we did not ask their political background. We didn't ask anything from them except to serve their province, without political interference, to make decisions that are at least 15 to 20 years overdue in this province.

The honourable member, depending on where he is in the province — he talks about being in favour of restructuring when he's down in the southwest because it's been received very positively there; he gets to other hospitals and he's totally against restructuring and he and his leader are going to save that particular hospital. I'd like to know where the honourable member is on restructuring. I'd like to know what you said to the commission as a member. Clearly you are allowed, as health critic, to write the commission under the *modus operandi* we're all operating under. Sitting on the fence isn't acceptable when it's a very sensitive and challenging time in health care.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. We all recall the debate around what was called Bill 26. That's the bill that set up the hospital restructuring commission. In this caucus we had major concerns about it. The reason was that we were told it was an independent, arm's-length agency that would make the final decision on hospital closings and that the cabinet would have no influence on it. That's what we were told and that's what I've been saying to my constituents, that Al Leach and Jim Wilson will not politically interfere in it. We were told that, and you played a big role in that bill.

We then found out that you actually wrote to the commission. We've also found out that the Integrity Commissioner has said that was wrong. He said you broke the integrity act. So it is clear: We were told that the commission would not have any political interference from the cabinet, and you did interfere. You broke the integrity act; you broke the law. My question is very simple: Knowing all of that, why did you not tender your resignation?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I accept the commissioner's report. My actions were certainly done with the best of intentions. I think the Integrity Commissioner understood that. In his ruling he stated quite clearly that no penalty should be imposed.



I can tell you that in a television interview last night, the Integrity Commissioner, when responding to the question of whether I should resign, stated: "I would not think so. If I had thought so, I would have said so." That's the position of the Integrity Commissioner.

We're quite prepared to accept the Integrity Commissioner's report. I'm quite prepared to do that. We're quite prepared to accept all his recommendations.

**Mr Phillips:** We wrote yesterday to the Integrity Commissioner to clarify the "no penalty" comment. The commissioner responded to us today in a communication to our leader, Mr McGuinty. Our leader yesterday said, "If the commissioner recommends that 'no penalty be imposed' under section 34(a), should the Legislature and the Premier automatically infer from that recommendation that the minister in question shall remain a member of the executive council?"

Here's what the Integrity Commissioner said, and it's very clear. It's up to you and the Premier: "Whether a member of the executive council remains in cabinet is not a matter for my office. It would not be correct to draw any inference that my recommendation 'that no penalty be imposed' has any relationship to a member's status as a member of the executive council."

In other words, the Integrity Commissioner said nothing about penalty. It is all about you, Minister. The Integrity Commissioner has said very clearly, "I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach contravened the Members' Integrity Act." He goes on to talk of "flagrant violation."

My question to you again is, it was clear that you broke the law —

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I also will quote the Integrity Commissioner in his report that was tabled yesterday. He stated that I made a mistake in good faith in the mistaken belief that I was entitled to do so, and, "Accordingly, I recommend that no penalty be imposed."

I'm going to quote again what the commissioner stated when he was asked specifically whether I should resign as a result of my actions. He said: "I would not think so. If I had thought so, I would have said so." That's what the commissioner stated categorically when he was asked specifically whether the actions that I took in writing a letter on behalf of my constituents to the hospital restructuring commission asking that they extend time so they could have all the information they needed to make a decision — that's what he stated. We accept the commissioner's report and its recommendations.

**Mr Phillips:** I repeat, we were told during the debate on the bill on the hospital restructuring, and this is what all the hospitals believed, that there wouldn't be political interference by the cabinet. I don't care what you say. The commissioner has concluded there was, that you acted improperly, you contravened the law.

The commissioner then goes on — it's very clear, and the public should be aware of this: "The no penalty applies to the member only as a member, but in terms of the cabinet, that is a decision up to the Premier and yourself." I repeat, because the integrity of the government is at stake, I have told the hospitals in my area that

cabinet won't interfere, and they now see you did interfere. They know you broke the law, albeit the commissioner said, "Well, perhaps he was just inexperienced," although you were 23 years in the public service and an assistant deputy minister. You're not a neophyte in this stuff. You broke the law.

Again, I repeat to you, will you try and restore some dignity and some integrity to the commission and the cabinet and will you simply say, "It is time for me to step aside on the basis of the commissioner's recommendations"?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I find it somewhat intriguing that when the Integrity Commissioner is non-partisan, has been set up and established by all three parties — I find it difficult to understand why the opposition parties are not prepared to accept his recommendation. His recommendation quite clearly was that there was no penalty to be —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order, member for Algoma. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again, I'll repeat specifically, when the Integrity Commissioner was specifically asked, "Should the minister resign?" he said, "If I had thought so, I would have said so." We are quite prepared, more than prepared, to accept responsibility for my actions and accept all the Integrity Commissioner's report and all his recommendations.

1430

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I want your views on this: What would you do with a minister whom the Speaker found a prima facie case of contempt against, who supported his executive assistant when his executive assistant launched a campaign of intimidation against a member of the public, a minister who was found in violation of the integrity act by the Integrity Commissioner. If you were Premier, what would you do with a minister like that?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I guess if I was Premier, a job I certainly wouldn't like to have, I would accept the recommendations that are put on the table by the Integrity Commissioner, which is exactly what this government has done. In every instance, we've accepted the ruling of the Speaker, we've accepted the recommendation of the Integrity Commissioner. That's exactly what I would do if I was Premier and that's exactly what the Premier of this province has done.

**Mr Hampton:** Minister, the situation is this: You don't seem to learn. You come in here and you're cited for a prima facie case of contempt of this Legislature. Then you go out and you support your executive assistant in a campaign of intimidation against a member of the public, which also comes to the attention of the Integrity Commissioner. Then you break the law in terms of members' integrity. You don't seem to learn. You just don't seem to learn.

Minister, do you not realize that you are lowering the standards of the whole government? You are lowering the standards of the whole cabinet. Don't you think it's time you resigned so that people with integrity can do the job?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'll repeat the answer that I gave to the member of the official opposition. If the Integrity Commissioner had thought that the minister should resign, he would have said so. I also want to state categorically that the Leader of the Opposition is incorrect, totally incorrect, when he states that we were found in violation of the Integrity Act with respect to the complaint by the member for Riverdale. The commissioner found that the minister did not violate the act, either personally or as a result of his executive assistant's activities, clearly found that there was no contravention of the integrity act. So the leader of the third party may want to correct that misinformation that he just provided to the House.

Again, we are quite prepared to accept the recommendations in all cases. Whether it comes from you, Mr Speaker, or from the Integrity Commissioner, we will accept those recommendations and act on them.

**Mr Hampton:** I understand that this particular minister either doesn't understand the rules or he doesn't believe that he needs to abide by the rules. In this case, he doesn't understand the rules. You see, Minister, under the Members' Integrity Act, the Integrity Commissioner doesn't have the capacity to take you out of cabinet. He doesn't have that capacity. Only the Premier has that capacity. When you talk about the Integrity Commissioner saying that you have to resign in cabinet or you don't have to resign in cabinet, he doesn't have that authority under the act.

The reality of whether you continue as a cabinet minister has to do with your standards of integrity. It has to do with the Premier's standards of integrity. Do you have the integrity to acknowledge that you have broken rule after rule, law after law, and that to respect the integrity of the cabinet you should resign? That's the question.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I, at least, am not going to have to take a lie detector test to prove any of the comments that I'm stating. And they want to talk about integrity. If there's a party anywhere on the face of the earth that lacked integrity, it was that group when they were in power.

Again, the leader of the third party is absolutely wrong. The Integrity Commissioner has the authority to remove a member from office or recommend that any member of this Legislature lose their seat. He can make a recommendation on any aspect, including up to that degree.

As to whether he could recommend, he could certainly recommend that a minister resign. He can certainly recommend that any member of this Legislature lose their seat as a result of actions against the integrity act. He did not do that. He recommended no penalty be imposed.

**The Speaker:** New question, leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** It is a sad commentary on this cabinet minister that we have to read the rules for him because he's incapable of either reading them or understanding them himself.

Minister, turn to page 40 of the act and it becomes very clear. The Integrity Commissioner does not have the authority under the act to remove you from cabinet.

That's the Premier's decision and that's your decision. That's based upon your own integrity or lack thereof. That's what it boils down to. Don't try to throw this off on the Integrity Commissioner. He doesn't have the authority under the act to remove you from cabinet. You have to make that decision.

Our point is this: You were found *prima facie* in contempt of this Legislature, you were found to support a campaign of intimidation by your executive assistant, and you were found in breach of this act. Will you do the decent thing and resign?

**Hon Mr Leach:** We are quite prepared to accept the recommendations of the Integrity Commissioner, and that's exactly what we intend to do.

I would like to correct the record. The leader of the third party keeps misinforming this House on the statement —

**The Speaker:** You know that's —

**Hon Mr Leach:** He incorrectly advises this House that the Integrity Commissioner found me to be in violation of the act when the member for Riverdale laid a false charge to the commission. The commissioner found that the minister did not violate the act, either personally or as a result of his executive assistant's activities.

I would like to repeat that this government and our Premier and this minister are quite prepared to accept the judgements either of the Speaker or of the Integrity Commissioner. In this instance we are accepting his recommendation fully, when he says no penalty should be imposed. We're accepting the recommendation. He has the power to recommend anything to the House.

**Mr Hampton:** It's clear that it hasn't sunk in. It's clear that you now want to put off on the Integrity Commissioner what is in reality a question of your own integrity. The Integrity Commissioner does not, under the integrity act, have the authority to remove you from your cabinet post. That depends upon your integrity; that depends upon your honour.

All we're saying to you is this: When social activists out there repeat the phrase, "Embarrass Harris," they didn't mean that you were supposed to do that. Will you do the honourable thing for the Premier and the honourable thing for your cabinet colleagues and resign? You shouldn't hold this job any more. With all the things you have done and the number of times you've been caught in the act, you simply shouldn't be a cabinet minister any more. Do the honourable thing and resign.

**Hon Mr Leach:** To repeat, had he chosen to do so, anything from resigning my seat in the Legislature entirely to resigning my position as a cabinet minister are within the Integrity Commissioner's power to recommend. What did he recommend? He recommended no penalty be imposed. What did he further recommend? He stated quite categorically, "If I thought the minister" —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I can't hear him any more..

**Hon Mr Leach:** I will repeat that the Integrity Commissioner clearly stated in a media interview on CBC on June 25, 1997: "I would not think so. If I had thought so, I would have said so." "I would have said so" is what he stated.



**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** That is resign as a member, not as a cabinet minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** In response to the member who says not as minister, he can recommend that you lose your seat, not just your job as a minister.

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**Mr Hampton:** I give up on that front. It does no good to try to convince this minister that there is a difference between being a minister of the crown and an MPP. He simply doesn't understand that. He wants to confuse the Integrity Commissioner's capacity with respect to MPPs with his role in cabinet.

I simply want to repeat this to you, Minister. This is what the Integrity Commissioner says in reference to the complaint brought by MPP Churley:

"I gave an opinion dated February 3, 1997 in which I considered Mr Matheson's actions" — your executive assistant's actions — "with respect to a prospective legal action against Mr Leach's ministry to be inappropriate, and I had occasion to remind Mr Leach of the fourth principle in the preamble to the act which states, 'Members are expected to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest public scrutiny'...."

"In my opinion, Mr Leach is having difficulty in adopting an attitude which is less confrontational, more consistent with his present office as a member of the executive council, and more appreciative of the parliamentary conventions...."

The problem you've got is that this is your third offence. This isn't the first time. This is your third offence. You keep coming back and doing this.

Will you do the honourable thing, recognize you are not fit to be a cabinet minister any longer and resign?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I just repeat that this government and this minister are quite prepared to accept the judgements that are given on any set of circumstances.

Mr Speaker, when you ruled on the pamphlet that was put out, we accepted that ruling and we took all the actions that were necessary to deal with it. When the Integrity Commissioner dealt with the complaint from Riverdale, he reported back that the commission found that the minister did not violate the act either personally or as a result of his executive assistant's activities. In this instance, when asked if I should resign, he said no. He recommended no penalty. We're quite prepared to accept the recommendations of the Integrity Commissioner.

**The Speaker:** New question, member for Fort William.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** My question is to the Minister of Health. I have here pages and pages of quotes of answers that you gave to my questions, stressing the independence of your hospital restructuring commission, saying, "The commission will ensure we take the politics out of restructuring the hospital system"; saying, "The commission will make the best decisions without political interference, and if you're suggesting political interference here, I can tell you you're dead wrong." I have letters you've written to my constituents saying that the commission operates at arm's length.

Minister, we disagreed with the law you put in place setting up this arm's-length commission. You said over and over again that this commission was independent. We

said over and over again that you can't wash your hands of the government's responsibility for decisions about health care and shutting down hospitals. But you went ahead and you set up a commission and you gave it unprecedented decision-making powers.

Clearly it has not been free of political interference. It has now been clearly ruled that it was inappropriate for one of your colleagues to contact this commission. Would you now acknowledge that your law effectively silences your colleagues and your government on this issue, or are there other backroom ways that cabinet ministers get to influence health care decisions?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The commission does operate at arm's length without political interference with respect to its decision-making. The only persons' opinions that matter in this whole thing are those of the commission and the chief commissioner, the chair of the commission, Dr Duncan Sinclair, and the commissioners. I invite you or anyone else to pick up the phone and ask them whether they feel there's been any political interference in any of the decisions they've made to date. I leave that to you to do the research. That is the only opinion that matters with respect to the decisions they are taking.

**Mrs McLeod:** When you were asked whether or not your colleague the Minister for Municipal Affairs was in error in writing to the hospital restructuring commission, you said no. In fact you said, "It is perfectly within the law and in fact it's a sign of a good MPP," and you went on and challenged all of us to do exactly the same thing. So much for saying it's free of political interference.

You were wrong, Minister. That was made clear yesterday. It is inappropriate, it is wrong, it is breaking your law for cabinet ministers to write to the commission.

Your Premier went further than that. He said none of us should be expressing our concerns to this commission when they come in and shut down hospitals in our community.

This is getting absolutely ridiculous. You can't silence all of us. Will you just shut down this commission, which was so poorly thought out in the first place that none of you — you don't know how it's supposed to work, clearly the Premier doesn't, certainly your colleagues don't. Will you shut it down and stop trying to hide behind this supposedly arm's-length commission?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** There are people in the honourable member's own party who serve on hospital boards in this province who very much value the work of the commission. The health services system needs to be restructured, and the commission is an invaluable way to do that and a way that I think all parties, in the past, anyway, have agreed was the best way to proceed in an area that hasn't been restructured significantly for 15 to 20 years.

What's significant about the decision yesterday and why the Premier is suggesting that it would be prudent for all members to refrain from writing at this point is because of the finality, it seems, of the ruling with respect to the word "quasi-judicial."

I set the commission up. It went through this House as a fact-finding body. "Quasi-judicial" means it would have appeals, it would hear evidence and all the rules of evidence. That section is the section the Attorney General will seek clarification on, because if it is quasi-judicial,



no one should have written the commission, including backbenchers, because quasi-judicial is like the disciplinary committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons; it's like a mental health tribunal. So get it through your thick heads —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Minister of Health.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I would like to withdraw that comment and correct the record.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister withdrew the comment. Minister.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** The honourable members claim to have read the report, and then they don't necessarily want to hear what the sticking point is that the Attorney General is trying to clear up. I'm just trying to be helpful in providing information. I think it is prudent — I agree with the Premier at this time — that no one, including backbenchers, have further contact with the commission, because many of the members over there also wrote the commission.

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** My question is for the Minister of Health as well. In February I asked the Minister of Health in your position while you were on sabbatical about a very disturbing story of health care neglect written up in the Sault Star by one Paul Kaihla about his father's dying days at the Plummer hospital in Sault Ste Marie.

The hospital carried out an internal investigation and concluded that nothing was out of order. We have evidence to the contrary. We have Mr Kaihla's charts, which say differently; we have the autopsy report, which says differently; we have witnesses and other stories, which indicate differently.

I asked for a ministerial review in February. I'm asking again today, will you undertake to have the ministry carry out an external review of this very disturbing story?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** We've received the reports of the hospital. It's not my purview at this point to launch an investigation into that, because if there was some suspicion of wrongdoing, the law requires the local coroner to make that decision. The coroner in this case saw no need to investigate the incident you bring forward.

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**Mr Martin:** If you were following this story at all, you would also know that in a letter to the editor and in an interview with a local reporter the chief pathologist at the hospital has revealed information about Mr Kaihla that is clearly in conflict with the Public Hospitals Act. Will you look into this and will you discuss this with the Attorney General, with the possibility of maybe laying a charge under that act against the people involved in this very disturbing situation?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** If the matter is some violation of the law, you may want to take that up with the Attorney General or with the local authorities, who would lay charges. You're making some very serious accusations against the Sault hospital. The investigators to date in all

the reports we've received indicate that there are two sides to the story. Local authorities, particularly the coroner, would make the decision whether an investigation is needed.

I will also mention that the hospital is undergoing the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation process right now and that may help identify and correct some deficiencies that may have occurred around the case in question.

At this point the honourable member is free to continue to send me information, but I would ask him to be prudent and careful about the accusations he's making about this particular hospital. In the past the honourable member has come to me for funding for this hospital and told me it was a great hospital.

### PLANT EXPANSIONS

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. We've all seen how Ontario's economy is responding to this government's plan of debt reduction, business expansion and job creation. There are rapid plant expansions going on throughout Ontario at this time. Can you please tell the House the latest economic projections and rates of growth?

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** I am very pleased to respond to the question from the member for Halton Centre. There's very good news on this subject. There are unprecedented business and plant expansions going on in this province; also job growth. There's a broad range and a variety of Ontario companies and products that are undergoing rapid expansion. The Ontario economy is predicted to grow faster than the Canadian rate of 3.4%. That's for 1997. I think it will probably grow at around the 3.6% rate in 1997.

The Royal and Scotia banks project fast growth for Ontario in 1997 and 1998. Representing the private sector average prediction, the 3.6% growth rate for the province's GDP rate is very possible. Ontario's employment jumped by 40,600 jobs in the month of May, so for the last three months it's been 101,000. I think it shows that our government's policies are definitely working.

**Mr Young:** For the first time in almost a decade our youth are expressing optimism about the job growth in their future. They're called the nexus generation.

What are some of these plant expansions worth, where are they located and what kinds of products are they producing?

**Hon Mr Saunderson:** I have some good examples which I'd like to read to the members of the House. First of all, at Freightliner heavy trucks in St Thomas there's a \$48.8-million expansion which will maintain 1,000 jobs and add approximately 50 more.

At the Humor-Breyers ice cream manufacturing facility in Simcoe, we'd like to report a \$25-million investment which will create 400 full-time or part-time jobs.

Glaxo Wellcome in Mississauga has just announced a \$120-million technological centre making medications for the world markets.



The Jefferson Elora car parts plant has announced a \$23-million investment creating 70 jobs.

Northern Telecom last week announced a \$250-million expansion. That will create 5,000 jobs in the next four years.

At Kumi Canada plants in Bradford-West Gwillimbury a \$14-million investment was announced. That's another —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** New question, member for Renfrew North.

### HEALTH SERVICES RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** My question is to the Minister of Health. Why should anyone pay attention and play this game with your so-called arm's-length, antiseptic hospital restructuring commission, which obviously not even Bart Simpson-Leach understands?

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Member, I ask you to withdraw that reference to the minister.

**Mr Conway:** I have to withdraw it. I withdraw it.

Why should anyone in Ontario play this so-called arm's-length, antiseptic game with your commission, when the only hospital that has been closed in this province in the last 20 years, namely the Burk's Falls Hospital, has been, in recent weeks, reopened by the exercise of raw, naked political power by the Deputy Premier of this province, the member for Parry Sound, the Honourable Ernie Eves QC?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** That is the cheap shot of cheap shots in this House, it really is.

First of all, it's not a game. The thousands of people in the health care system and the millions of patients who rely on it don't think this is a game. Secondly, that Burk's Falls Hospital was always a hospital. It was never reopened. It has been on the books as a hospital. It became a hospital without beds under the NDP. It used to have 15 beds, acute care beds. There was a task force report over the last year. When that task force report came in, it recommended six beds, which are a lower cost than the acute care beds it used to have; they're observation beds. We were simply responding to the task force report, which the honourable member is free to read.

**Mr Conway:** Your nose is growing, Minister, and parliamentary convention prohibits me from saying what I would want to say on the basis of the facts as I know them about Burk's Falls.

In communities like Arnprior, Barry's Bay, Grimsby, Petrolia and Meaford they are getting very concerned, traumatized, by your government's activities and the work of this commission, which clearly people like Leach and Runciman do not understand. If your cabinet colleagues don't understand it, how are the people supposed to behave?

What are they to make of the fact that Ernie Eves reopened the hospital at Burk's Falls without any reference to the commission and little or no reference to the district health council? What are they to think when the Minister of Health himself, Jim Wilson, Esq, is wandering around Simcoe county and telling people in places like Alliston: "Don't worry. You have nothing to worry

about. Your hospital, the Stevenson Memorial in Alliston, is secure. Trust me." How is it that that's arm's length and antiseptic? How is it that the commission gets to go to places like Pembroke and the Niagara Peninsula and only Ernie Eves and Jim Wilson get to go to Burk's Falls and Alliston?

**Hon Mr Wilson:** First of all, whether it's my riding or your riding or any other riding, I have consistently said that the Health Services Restructuring Commission has made it clear to all members that nobody is exempt from health services restructuring. It is not going to be the status quo in our rural northern hospitals. The commission has asked for a rural policy, which will be unveiled very shortly, to guide its work there.

Secondly, he should do his research better. The quote is outdated, and by the way, the Alliston Herald, where you got that quote that ended up in the Toronto Star editorial, is my local paper. I know exactly where that comes from, that story. The Herald wrote the Star and CP saying that the quote comes from my days in opposition. The date of the quote is totally wrong. I based it on 1990-95, when Simcoe county had already gone through restructuring.

The second floor of my hospital in Alliston has no beds. It's half of what it used to be. The Collingwood hospital used to have 103 beds; it has 49 today. Don't ever pretend that my hospitals haven't restructured. It's just that they got off the block —

**The Speaker:** Order. Thank you, Minister.

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### NIAGARA ESCARPMENT COMMISSION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a question to the Minister of Natural Resources. I believe that most people in Ontario were very proud that in 1990 UNESCO designated the Niagara Escarpment as a world biosphere reserve. It represents one of the world's most important ecosystems. There are only two such reserves in Ontario and only six in Canada. It's clear that the Niagara Escarpment won the designation because of the province's protection plan, which balances the environment and the pressures which are brought to bear on it by the population living in the escarpment.

A simple question: Do you support the UNESCO designation and the provincial legislation which controls planning in the Niagara Escarpment?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Before you get there: Member for Renfrew North, you must withdraw your heckle to the minister.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** If you say so, sir. In respect of you and your office, I will.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Minister of Natural Resources?

*Interjections.*

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I'm not sure they're done here, Speaker.

**Mr Conway:** I said I withdraw. If I've said anything that upsets —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. You know what? I didn't hear what he said. If any member across the floor would like to stand up and make the request, I can always hear that. I didn't hear what he said. I'm sorry. I sit very close and I didn't hear it. Right now I go to the Minister of Natural Resources for the response.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** The answer is yes.

**Ms Martel:** If that's your position, maybe you can explain the following to me. You recently appointed Mr Howard Staff to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Your ministry's biography of Mr Staff conveniently neglected to mention his membership with the Niagara Escarpment Land Owners' Coalition.

During the Niagara Escarpment Plan review process, this organization was vociferous in its opposition to the Niagara Escarpment Commission, its mandate and its operation. But over and above that, this coalition of which Mr Staff is a member also wrote to Mr Terrence Cook at the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and said the following, "We wish to formally request the temporary suspension of the biosphere designation for the Niagara Escarpment planning area."

Minister, aren't you a little bit embarrassed about the position of your appointee and don't you think it's time to pull the plug on Mr Howard Staff?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I appreciate the question from the member of the third party. This government has a wider perspective in terms of accepting all points of view, and a good commission should represent all the views of the affected communities. I've already answered your question that there will be no change to the Niagara planning act or the region or the designation by the UN.

I don't believe your party has an exclusive monopoly on caring about the environment. If you look at our record, our record speaks for itself. We're accomplishing things that are concrete. Furthermore, I'd like to remind the member that she wants to circumvent the democratic process every time she stands up. A week ago she asked me to circumvent the process where members of this elected assembly get to review the appointments of the nominees. Today I understand that we agreed that we would have —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Just a minute, Minister.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Take some responsibility. You guys take no responsibility for anything you do. You are the cabinet minister. They are your appointments.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** That's a bunch of crap.

**Ms Lankin:** We know where you stand, Bill.

**Mr Murdoch:** Get out of here. Wake up, you bunch of people. Don't be so hypocritical.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Member for Grey-Owen Sound, I have to ask you to withdraw about half a dozen of those comments.

**Mr Murdoch:** I'll withdraw half.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to request unanimous consent for the Minister of Environment and Energy also to be able to respond to this question.

**The Speaker:** Agreed? No. Minister?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I'm glad to see that the official opposition recognizes that this government does care about the environment. Norm and I both share that interest.

**The Speaker:** Answer, please.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Thank you very much again, Mr Speaker. The appointments, the nominees we support. We think they bring a balance to the board. If you look at the whole board, it will be dedicated to preserving what's important to be preserved and customer service. I think that when you have a chance to review these appointments at your committee level, you'll agree.

## COURT BACKLOG

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** My question is for the Attorney General: I understand that the criminal case backlog blitz in Barrie has had very encouraging results. Everyone knows the importance of the blitz in preventing another occurrence of the 1990 crisis when 50,000 cases were dismissed because they were beyond the eight-month deadline to come to trial. Could you please inform the Legislature of the results to date in the Barrie court?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank the member for Simcoe Centre for an important question because, as I've said in this House before, reducing the court backlog is my number one priority.

We are seeing some very definite and very positive results in blitz sites, and Barrie is no exception. The blitz has been operational in Barrie for two months. We've reduced the number of charges in the inventory in that court by over 10%. Cases today are proceeding through the system more quickly than they have in many years. It's now three months to get a trial date, down from eight months when the blitz started. These are very concrete results illustrating the success of the blitz. Certainly we are working very hard to ensure that we don't have another Askov crisis.

**Mr Tascona:** I'd like to report back to my constituents in Simcoe Centre the actions we are taking to keep our communities safe. Could you please tell me how these results are being achieved?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** In Barrie, we have dedicated three new crown attorneys, four new courtroom staff and two judges. We've worked closely with our justice system partners to find ways to combat the backlog and our early success in Barrie is the realization of that hard work. Early disclosure of evidence at an accused's first appearance and mandatory pretrials are now resolving more cases earlier in the process.

We're working to identify viable long-term solutions that will make court blitzes, I hope, a thing of the past. As I've said, clearing the backlog will lead to more timely prosecutions and get criminals off our streets so Ontarians can feel secure in their homes and communities and victims' rights are accordingly strengthened.

## VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** In the opposition members' gallery is the former member for Northumberland, Joan Fawcett. Welcome.



## REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I want to go back to your interpretation of the ruling of the Integrity Commissioner. As late as 10 minutes ago, I checked with the commissioner's office regarding the powers under the act to make recommendations.

The commissioner's office stated very clearly that under the act, the commissioner does not have the authority to make any recommendations as to your status as a member of the cabinet. It does not fall within his purview or jurisdiction. Any reference the commissioner made to the recommendation, to your removal, only refers to your seat as a member for St George-St David, not as a member of the executive council.

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Minister, if you can clearly understand that the commission does not have the power to recommend your removal as a member of the cabinet, that it's only yourself or the Premier who makes that decision based on the standards that you feel are appropriate for cabinet ministers, knowing that information, clearly, again — I'm hoping by now you understand that — will you do the honourable thing today and submit your resignation in order to restore some integrity to your cabinet?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'll advise the member of the Liberal Party that the Integrity Commissioner can recommend anything he wants. He can recommend that you lose your seat entirely. He has recommended in this instance that no penalty be imposed. When he was asked on CBC television last night, June 25, he said: "I would think not. If I had thought so, I would have said so." Obviously if the commissioner felt that I should resign either my seat or my cabinet position, he would have said so in his ruling.

**Mr Agostino:** I'm frankly surprised that the minister would not know the Members' Integrity Act, that the minister would not understand the role of the commissioner. There's a difference between a member of the Legislature and your capacity as a member of the cabinet. Let me read to you from a letter from the Integrity Commissioner sent to us today:

"It is my opinion that the recommendation 'that no penalty be imposed' refers to the member's status as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

"Whether a member of the executive council remains in cabinet is not a matter for my office. It would not be correct to draw any inference that my recommendation 'that no penalty be imposed' has any relationship to a member's status as a member of the executive council."

I'm going to table that letter with the House so you can see it. The Integrity Commissioner in the letter to us totally contradicts what you're saying. He is referring to you as a member of the Legislature, as an MPP, not as a cabinet minister. You surely must understand the difference. I do not believe what you're saying in comparison to the Integrity Commissioner; I believe the Integrity Commissioner in his letter. Will you —

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Thank you very much. Minister.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I far prefer to accept the word of the Integrity Commissioner. It's quite clearly quoted here that if he felt there should be a resignation, he would have recommended that. He didn't. He said that the actions I took were taken in good faith — they were an attempt to assist my constituents in the great riding of St George-St David — and he said that no penalty should be imposed. When asked specifically if I should resign as a minister, he said, "If I felt that he should, I would have recommended that he do so." He obviously doesn't believe there should be a resignation. We're quite prepared to accept the findings of the Integrity Commissioner and we're quite prepared to accept all his recommendations.

## MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION EMPLOYEES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** A question to the Minister of Transportation: Last week in the St Catharines area, I met with a number of employees of the Ministry of Transportation who work at the MTO main office in St Catharines. They expressed concern that your government is planning to lay off a number of the people who work at that main office. I also talked with other people in the Niagara region who are very concerned about that prospect as well.

After all, it was your government that sat down and reviewed the decision to move the main office to St Catharines, it was your government that made the final decision and your government that in effect moved literally hundreds of people down to St Catharines. They're very concerned now about the economic impact and about those jobs. Will you deny that your ministry and your government are planning to lay off a number of MTO people at the main office in St Catharines?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** As the honourable member knows, changes such as these, if they are going to be done, are always difficult. Prior to the election, and also in our business plan, we were very up front that we did want to do better with less. I can only tell the honourable member that there are going to be some layoffs affecting the Kitchener area and these people will be notified who it's going to concern.

**Mr Hampton:** St Catharines.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** St Catharines. Sorry.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Supplementary? Member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Minister, you know that almost 700 individuals were transferred to the St Catharines MTO office. It was as a result of a decision that you and your government made. The cost per employee was approximately \$28,000. These people relied on your commitment to their jobs in this new location in St Catharines, and relying on your commitment, they moved their families and they underwent major disruption. You have now plunged every one of those employees and their families into a state of chaos because of the uncertainty about their future with the Ministry of Transportation. No fairminded person could conclude that what you're doing to them now is in any way decent or appropriate conduct on the part of any employer.

What can you tell us to calm the incredible fears being suffered by those workers and their families?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** As I have said, I believe changes of this nature are always going to be difficult. As far as what the honourable member is asking, seven of the people who have been relocated to St Catharines are going to be affected or have been affected by the current layoffs.

All employees are going to receive a benefit package that's going to be very suitable. Each employee who receives a notice will get a specific package of options that is going to be best tailored to their needs. I also want to say that through vacancy management and bridging of people towards retirement, effects on staff who have moved specifically to the St Catharines area are very limited.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The Minister of Municipal Affairs incorrectly, I believe, quoted the Office of the Integrity Commissioner. I would ask him to review the Hansard and to correct the record.

**The Speaker:** That is not a point of order.

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I assume this is the last day that we'll be seeing this current class of pages. I think it would be appropriate for us to recognize their service and wish them well.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** That's very true. It was my fault. It should have been done at the beginning and it wasn't. I've been rather distracted today, so I apologize, but I don't want that to cast anything but good light on this cast of pages. They've done a wonderful job. I appreciate it and I'm sure the members here appreciate it. Thank you very much.

Motions?

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I would ask for unanimous consent that we proceed with petitions, which I guess would be the next order at this point, and that we be able to revert to motions after that so that I can discuss the possibility of dealing with the Integrity Commissioner's report with the other two parties.

**The Speaker:** Let me just be clear about this. The government House leader is asking that we defer motions until after introduction of bills? Okay. Agreed? Agreed.

## PETITIONS

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Peter North (Elgin):** I have a petition to protect the right to hunt black bear in Ontario. It reads:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas the black bear population in Ontario is not threatened in any way by wildlife management programs such as the spring bear hunt; and

"Whereas the Ontario black bear population is one of the largest in North America due to effective wildlife management, including hunting; and

"Whereas black bears are just one of the many species of game animals that Ontario residents have the right to hunt during the spring and fall; and

"Whereas the combined total economic impact of bear, moose and deer hunting accounts for more than \$302 million, \$30.1 million of which can be attributed to the bear hunt; and

"Whereas the Ontario Game and Fish Act provides laws which protect the black bear resource; and

"Whereas the rights of Ontario residents who enjoy recreational outdoor activities such as hunting and sport fishing are being threatened by the misleading campaigns of animal rights activists;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to uphold the fish and game act and protect and preserve the rights therein."

I have affixed my signature to this.

1520

### HIGHWAY 601

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current Harris government has reduced funding for highway construction and maintenance in northwestern Ontario; and

"Whereas the current condition of Highway 601 jeopardizes the personal safety and property of residents of northwestern Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the Harris government commit funds to pave Highway 601 and designate the section of 601 adjacent to Sprucedale School a school zone."

I'd like to thank Mr and Mrs McArthur for heading up this petition for me, and I've attached my name to it as well.

### ATLAS SPECIALTY STEELS

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, its headline "Keep Atlas Steels Open":

"Whereas the closure of Atlas Specialty Steels, Welland, would not only affect the 1,100 employees and their families, but would drastically affect our community as a whole;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make a commitment to assist in support of Atlas Specialty Steels in Welland, Ontario, to ensure this important facility remains open."

That is signed by thousands of persons. I affix my signature and I give that petition to Tina Saxon, page from Welland, more specifically Welland south, to deliver to the Clerk.

### CASINOS

**Mr Gary L. Leadston (Kitchener-Wilmot):** This petition reads:

"Whereas there is much documented evidence that the social and economic disadvantages of government-sanctioned gambling far outweigh any apparent benefits;



"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, declare our opposition to the expansion of casinos and the installation of electronic gambling devices. Therefore, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to delay the implementation of Bill 75 and request that the provincial government hold a binding referendum, in conjunction with the 1997 municipal elections, to determine the will of the people regarding the expansion of casinos and the installation of electronic gambling devices in Ontario."

#### JUGEMENT DE LA COUR D'APPEL

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** I have a petition here which is on a very controversial issue, the topless issue. It's in French:

«À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

«Attendu que le jugement de la Cour d'appel a été en faveur de la dame qui ne portait pas de haut dans un endroit public ;

«Attendu que la majorité de la population de l'Ontario s'oppose à cette décision ;

«Attendu que cette décision est à l'encontre des valeurs morales et humaines de la majorité des résidents et résidentes de l'Ontario ;

«Nous, les soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

«Que le premier ministre de l'Ontario apporte un projet de loi qui interdit la nudité du haut du corps des femmes dans les endroits publics et qui spécifie des lignes de conduite pour les endroits désignés privés.»

C'est avec plaisir que j'y ajoute ma signature.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly Ontario and it reads:

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the protections of the Rent Control Act;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to allow a landlord to charge a tenant who moves into an apartment whatever the landlord can get away with;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to raise the limit of how high rents can increase for all tenants;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to make it easier to demolish or convert existing affordable rental housing;

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to take away the 'rent freeze' which has been successful in forcing some landlords to repair their buildings;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the existing rent laws, which provide true protection for tenants, in place."

I affix my signature to this and give it to the page who lives in my riding, Nick Martin.

#### ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have a petition signed by a great number of my constituents in Oxford county. Similar petitions presented before bring the total to almost 2,400 signatures. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas a commercial building may be considered 'barrier free' when a disabled person has unobstructed access into that building and may receive all of the services and conveniences that are available within the building to a person without disability;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That legislation be passed requiring that all structurally renovated commercial buildings be made 'barrier free.'"

I affix my signature, as I agree with it.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I have affixed my signature to it.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have a petition signed by about 5,000 people from the London and Middlesex area that reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, urge you to reject the recommendations of the Framework for Action on the Prevention of Violence Against Women in Ontario report.

"We are supportive of the work currently being done by community-based sexual assault and rape crisis centres and women's shelters. We strongly oppose any cutbacks in funding for these vital services.

"We find recommendations such as those to limit a woman's stay in a shelter to 24 to 48 hours and to eliminate community-based rape crisis and sexual assault centres to be outrageous and unacceptable."

I have affixed my signature and I'm handing the petitions to Erin de Vreez, who is a page from the London Centre riding.

#### COURT DECISION

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by about a thousand people from my riding.

"Whereas the courts have ruled that women have the lawful right to go topless in public; and



"Whereas the Liberal government of Canada has the power to change the Criminal Code to reinstate such public nudity as an offence;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to pass a bill empowering municipalities to enact bylaws governing dress code and to continue to urge the government of Canada to pass legislation to reinstate such partial nudity as an offence."

I agree with this petition and I affix my signature.

### STANDING ORDERS REFORM

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** This petition is to stop the Harris government's plan to kill debate in the Legislature and it reads like this:

"Whereas the people of Ontario want rigorous discussion on legislation dealing with public policy issues like health care, education and care for seniors; and

"Whereas many people in Ontario believe that the Mike Harris government is moving too quickly and recklessly, creating havoc with the provision of quality health care, quality education, and adversely affecting seniors; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to change the rules of the Ontario Legislature, which would allow the government to ram legislation through more quickly and have less accountability to the public and the media through exercises such as question period; and

"Whereas Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, when they were in opposition, defended the rights of the opposition and used the rules to their full advantage when they believed it was necessary to slow down the passage of controversial legislation; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government now wishes to reduce the amount of time that MPPs will have to debate the important issues of the day; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government, through its proposed rule changes, is attempting to diminish the role of elected members of the Legislative Assembly who are accountable to the people who elect them, and instead concentrate power in the Premier's office in the hands of people who are not elected officials;

"We, the undersigned, call upon Mike Harris to reject these proposed draconian rule changes and restore rules which promote rigorous debate on contentious issues and hold the government accountable to the people of Ontario."

I hand my petition to Nick, who is a wonderful page and has done a wonderful job while he is here.

1530

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by citizens of Windsor, Guelph, Brantford, Sault Ste Marie, St Catharines, Oshawa and Toronto. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government's contribution to prevention services made through the WCB has been reduced from \$62 million to \$47 million, with no explanation as to where this money has gone; and

"Whereas the prevention services that the Ministry of Labour once provided are being offloaded to the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and other safety associations, thereby increasing the demand for the prevention services provided by the centre; and

"Whereas the government has gutted the certification training standards for health and safety committee members and replaced them with minimalist performance standards which, in combination with funding cuts, has resulted in a 40% reduction in the staff of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre is facing further cuts of \$2.3 million to finance the establishment of several new employer safety associations, thereby duplicating administrative costs and services;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the gutting of the funding of prevention services provided by the Workers' Health and Safety Centre; and

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that the moneys taken from the health and safety prevention services of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the other safety associations be returned to them."

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I proudly add my name to theirs.

### WATER CHLORINATION

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** I have a petition, and I am pleased to have Katie Fyfe here to receive it for me on this, her last day in the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas the chemical substance chlorine was added to the people of Milton's pure well water supply in 1995; and

"Whereas the Halton regional water delivery system in the town of Milton has received the regular maintenance and standard upgrade requirements outlined by the province and is supported by a standby chlorination unit sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat; and

"Whereas the people of the town of Milton overwhelmingly supported the belief that a standby chlorination requirement is sufficient enough to prevent the spread of a serious bacterial threat;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"Be it resolved that the Ontario government grant the people of Milton's request for a variance allowing only standby chlorination to be used in treating the pure well waters supplying Milton's water delivery system."

I am pleased to affix my signature to the petition.

### GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads:

"Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to restructure completely the provincial and municipal relationship, without having consulted the people of Ontario; and

This restructuring proposes to download to municipalities the cost of transportation and such critical social services as welfare and long-term care for the elderly and the chronically ill; and



Removes school boards' ability to tax, eliminating any effective local control of schools and school programs; and

The government's actions fail to guarantee existing levels of funding and fail to recognize unequal ability of local communities to bear the cost of these new burdens, thus producing inequitable access to essential services; and

"Whereas the government's lack of meaningful public health consultation, and disregard for public response poses a serious threat to democracy;

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, because we care about the quality of life in our province and the wellbeing of our children, neighbours and communities, register a vote of non-confidence in the government of the province of Ontario."

I have attached my name to that petition as well.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition signed by members of the United Steelworkers of America, CAW, OPSEU, CUPE, CEP and UFCW. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Labour has begun a process to fundamentally alter the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations with the release of the discussion paper Review of the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and

"Whereas these changes threaten to deregulate the health and safety protection for workers and reduce or eliminate the rights of workers and joint health and safety committees; and

"Whereas the ministry intentionally organized meetings in a manner which allowed only marginal opportunity for workers to discuss with the ministry the issues raised in the discussion paper; and

"Whereas workers deserve a full opportunity to be heard regarding the proposals that threaten the legislated provisions that provide them with protection from workplace injury, illness and death;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose the deregulation of workplace health and safety and any erosion of the protection provided workers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that province-wide public hearings be held once any amendments to the act are introduced."

It ought to be more than the six measly days the government's giving for WCB. I add my name to these petitions.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is there unanimous consent to have one more petition for the member for Grey-Owen Sound? Agreed.

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** This petition has been given to me and signed by people in my riding and all over Ontario. It is to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas black bear populations in Ontario are healthy with between 75,000 and 100,000 animals and their

numbers are stable or increasing in many areas of the province; and

"Whereas black bear hunting is enjoyed by over 20,000 hunters annually in Ontario, and black bears are a well-managed, renewable resource; and

"Whereas bear hunting replaces natural mortality and reduces cannibalism among bears; and

"Whereas hunting regulations are based on sustained yield principles and all forms of hunting are needed to optimize the socioeconomic benefits associated with hunting; and

"Whereas the value of the spring bear hunt to tourist operators in northern Ontario is \$30 million annually, generating about 500 person-years of employment; and

"Whereas animal rights activists have launched a campaign of misinformation and rhetoric to ban bear hunting and end our hunting heritage in Ontario, ignoring the enormous impact this would have on the people of Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to protect our hunting heritage and continue to support all current forms of black bear hunting."

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### FARMING AND FOOD PRODUCTION PROTECTION ACT, 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'AGRICULTURE ET DE LA PRODUCTION AGRICOLE

Mr Villeneuve moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 146, An Act to protect Farming and Food Production / Projet de loi 146, Loi protégeant l'agriculture et la production alimentaire.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Just a short summary: This is an act to protect farming and food production. The bill is designed to protect normal farm practices to the extent that it is reasonable to do so, even though they may cause some disturbance to nearby residents.

The Farm Practices Protection Board is continued under the name Normal Farm Practices Protection Board. The current Farm Practices Protection Act is being replaced. The board would function to resolve disputes arising from disturbances that may be caused by farming.

#### MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT (BY-LAWS RESPECTING DRESS CODES), 1997

#### LOI DE 1997 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS EN CE QUI CONCERNE DES RÈGLEMENTS MUNICIPAUX RELATIVEMENT À DES NORMES DE TENUE VESTIMENTAIRE

Mr Jim Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to amend the Municipal Act to allow local municipalities to pass by-laws with respect to dress codes / Projet de loi 147, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités pour permettre aux municipalités locales d'adopter des règlements municipaux en ce qui concerne des normes de tenue vestimentaire.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1997 (No. 2)

##### LOI DE 1997 SUR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO (n° 2)

Mr Leach moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to deal with matters relating to the establishment of the new City of Toronto / Projet de loi 148, Loi traitant de questions se rapportant à la constitution de la nouvelle cité de Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I just want to say that this bill is largely operational and administrative in nature, but it's absolutely necessary for the new city to be completely operational by January 1, 1998.

#### FAIR MUNICIPAL FINANCE ACT, 1997 (No. 2)

##### LOI DE 1997 SUR LE FINANCEMENT ÉQUITABLE DES MUNICIPALITÉS (n° 2)

Mr Eves moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 149, An Act to continue the reforms begun by the Fair Municipal Finance Act, 1997 and to make other amendments respecting the financing of local governments / Projet de loi 149, Loi continuant les réformes amorcées par la Loi de 1997 sur le financement équitable des municipalités et apportant d'autres modifications relativement au financement des administrations locales.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The Fair Municipal Finance Act, 1997 (No. 2) builds on the reforms of the Fair Municipal Finance Act to create a property system that is fair, more consistent and accountable to Ontario taxpayers. This bill ensures the fair treatment of farms, small businesses and other commercial and industrial properties. It gives municipalities more flexibility to respond effectively to local priorities. It further protects low-income seniors and the disabled. It closes tax loopholes to help stabilize the tax base for the future.

The measures in this new bill will ensure a smooth and efficient transition to a fair property tax system for all property owners in the province of Ontario. The legislation introduced today, coupled with the reforms in the Fair Municipal Finance Act, will give all Ontario taxpayers a system of property assessment and taxation that is fair, consistent, understandable and accountable.

#### ST CATHARINES GENERAL HOSPITAL ACT, 1997

Mr Froese moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr70, An Act respecting the St Catharines General Hospital.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### CITY OF SCARBOROUGH ACT, 1997

Mr Newman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr78, An Act respecting the City of Scarborough.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** Mr Speaker, could we have unanimous consent for a 10-minute recess, please.

**The Speaker:** Do we have agreement for a 10-minute recess? Agreed.

*The House recessed from 1543 to 1553.*

#### COMMITTEE SITTING

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent that the standing committee on general government could sit so that they could hear witnesses immediately, notwithstanding the fact that the House has not started regular proceedings.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** Agreed? Agreed.

#### MOTIONS

##### REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I would seek unanimous consent — I believe I need that — to deal with the report of the Integrity Commissioner.

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** You're seeking unanimous consent to move a motion?

**Hon David Johnson:** Yes.

**The Speaker:** You're seeking unanimous consent to move a motion with respect to the report by the Integrity Commissioner. That's fine.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** We have to see the motion.

**The Speaker:** That's not an agreement.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Why doesn't the government House leader indicate what he's going to move?

**The Speaker:** That's a good idea. Why don't you read the motion before you seek unanimous consent.

**Hon David Johnson:** I move that the June 25, 1997, report of the Integrity Commissioner be referred to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly;

That the committee consider the report and respond directly to the Integrity Commissioner; and

That the committee be authorized to meet for two days before July 25, 1997.



**The Speaker:** I'm not going to read it again because I think everyone understood it. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? No, there's not unanimous consent. Motions.

**Hon David Johnson:** I tried. We tried to deal with the item. I have no other motions at this time.

**The Speaker:** Orders of the day.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, government notice of motion number 26.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** Government notice of motion number 26, Mr Johnson (Don Mills).

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The fact that the government House leader proposed a motion which did not find unanimous consent doesn't relieve the government of the need to deal with the report. I would ask that we have some indication —

**The Speaker:** That's debate at this time.

**Mrs McLeod:** No, I'm seeking clarification. The House is about to recess this evening.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate that and I think I dealt exactly with that particular point of order you're standing on earlier today with the member for Downsview. I was very clear and specific with respect to that. If you want, get an opportunity to re-read, or consult with the member for Downsview before I go into explanation again.

**Mrs McLeod:** Then maybe it could just be a brief explanation on the change.

**The Speaker:** Okay, then I will. My ruling yesterday was clear. There are 30 calendar days in which the government has to respond to the Integrity Commissioner's report. We are merely in day two.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** The assembly.

**The Speaker:** I'm sorry, you're right. The assembly has the obligation to deal with the report. We're only in day two. At this point in time it's completely up to the government House leader how he wants to order the business of the House.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would seek unanimous consent from the House that we debate the motion standing in the name of the leader of the official opposition.

**The Speaker:** It's in order to ask for unanimous consent to leave the particular issue that you've called for

the orders of the day and to enter into that debate. It's not out of order. If you don't want to do that, simply by speaking a no we wouldn't do that.

The member for Algoma has moved unanimous consent to change the order from 26 to the motion standing in the name of the leader of the official opposition. Agreed?

**Hon David Johnson:** Can I speak to that?

**The Speaker:** No, it's not debateable, it's unanimous consent.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In that case, I seek unanimous consent that the motion presented by the third party with regard to the Integrity Commissioner's report be debated.

**Hon David Johnson:** Just on that, neither of those motions comply with the requirements of the integrity act. That is the difficulty.

**The Speaker:** That's debate. I guess what the member for Algoma is asking for is unanimous consent, and that's in order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** With the greatest respect, that's debate. He's asked for unanimous consent and it's in order. The member is asking that we debate the motion from the leader of the third party. Agreed? No.

**Mrs McLeod:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I fully understood your ruling of yesterday and that was why I rose on a further point of order, given the fact that it was the government's intention to respond to that report today. Clearly that motion was not accepted by the House with unanimous consent, but if I understand your ruling from yesterday, there must then be a new House calendar motion to bring the House back, in order that the requirement of the assembly dealing with this issue and reporting within 30 days can be met. Right now, as of midnight tonight, we have no motion that brings us back before August 18, which is past the 30 days. That's what I was seeking clarification on.

**The Speaker:** Again I say, as I said yesterday, it is out of my hands at that time. That's not a decision I would take, nor am I am compelled nor given the authority to take. I can only rule on the orders brought forward, and I don't have any authority to make that kind of decision.

*Report continues in volume B.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston  
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell  
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller  
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Tony (PC)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (seniors issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Cambridge	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)</b> Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie	Leeds-Grenville	<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)</b> Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Carleton	Morin, Gilles E. (L)		Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Carleton East / -Est	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Lincoln	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Chatham-Kent	Wood, Len (ND)	London Centre / -Centre	<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)</b> Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Cochrane North / -Nord	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	London North / -Nord	Wood, Bob (PC)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Cleary, John C. (L)		<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)</b> Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Cornwall	<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC)</b> Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	London South / -Sud	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Don Mills	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Markham	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Dovercourt	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)		<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC)</b> Minister of Education and Training / ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Downsview	Tilson, David (PC)	Middlesex	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC)</b> Minister without Portfolio (privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Durham Centre / -Centre	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Durham East / -Est	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)</b> Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	Mississauga South / -Sud	Baird, John R. (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	Munro, Julia (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Maves, Bart (PC)
Durham-York	<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William (PC)</b> Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme		Hudak, Tim (PC)
Eglinton	North, Peter (Ind)	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Laughren, Floyd (ND)
Elgin	Hoy, Pat (L)	Nepean	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC)</b> Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Essex-Kent	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Niagara Falls	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Essex South / -Sud	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Niagara South / -Sud	Galt, Doug (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Kells, Morley (PC)	Nickel Belt	Carr, Gary (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Hastings, John (PC)	Nipissing	Colle, Mike (L)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b>		Vacant
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Speaker / Président	Norfolk	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)	Northumberland	Patten, Richard (L)
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Oakville South / -Sud	Grandmaitre, Bernard (L)
Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)	Oakwood	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)
Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Oriole	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)	Oshawa	Chiarelli, Robert (L)
Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)
Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Ottawa East / -Est	
Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)	Ottawa-Rideau	
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	
Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)		
Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)	Ottawa West / -Ouest	
Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)	Oxford	



Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Parry Sound	<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC)</b> Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)</b> Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	Victoria-Haliburton	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)</b> Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo North / -Nord	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)</b> Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC)</b> Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Wellington	Amott, Ted (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Isabel (PC)	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)	Willowdale	<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC)</b> Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
St George-St David	<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC)</b> Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Samia	Boushy, Dave (PC)	Windsor-Riverside	Vacant
Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)	York Centre / -Centre	<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC)</b> Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Scarborough-Ellesmere	<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn (PC)</b> Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	York Mills	Turnbull, David (PC)
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		Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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**Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 26 June 1997**

**Jeudi 26 juin 1997**

Speaker  
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers





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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 26 June 1997

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 26 juin 1997

*Report continued from volume A.*

1600

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TIME ALLOCATION

**Hon David Johnson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Government House Leader):** I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order, when the order of the day is called for resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for adoption of amendments to the standing orders, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion and any amendments thereto, which questions shall be decided without further amendment or debate. If a recorded vote is requested, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes and no deferral of the division pursuant to standing order 28(g) shall be permitted.

We have been fortunate to have quite a long period of debate on the standing order procedures. I'm just trying to recall now — there was a suspicion that the standing orders were introduced on election day, but in actual fact, my parliamentary assistant, John Baird, the member for Nepean, brought forward a report on that particular day. However, the government did take into account Mr Baird's suggestions with regard to the standing orders and —

*Interjections.*

**Hon David Johnson:** I really don't know what all the fuss is about.

Those suggestions were brought forward. The government has brought forward changes to the standing orders, as did the previous government. For some reason or another, we have a self-righteous group, who brought forward time allocation — and it was all right for the previous government to bring forward standing order changes, all right for the previous government to bring in time allocation, but for some reason or other, this government, under different circumstances, is not permitted to do that. I'm sorry, I don't see the logic in that.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** We've got an agreement on a calendar motion.

**Hon David Johnson:** I might say that any agreements we've had have been honoured by this government, for sure. If there is any allegation that any agreements have not been honoured, I'd like to know the specifics of any —

**Mr Wildman:** The letter of the agreement has been.

**Hon David Johnson:** Absolutely. The letter and —

**Mr Wildman:** The letter, but not the spirit.

**Hon David Johnson:** No. I'm sorry, I'd have to dispute that.

We have had well over 30 hours of debate on the standing order procedures. This, I believe, is the fifth day of debate in a sense that we've had on the standing orders. The standing orders are important to us, and I'm going to state again the objectives of the standing orders because I think they're important. The people of Ontario are going to hear different objectives, have heard different objectives, but I can tell you what the objectives of the government are.

The objectives of the government are numerous. There's more than one. One of the objectives is certainly to involve more members of the Legislature in the debate. Some of the members opposite say, "Oh, sure," sort of thing, but today the lead speaker on an item has 90 minutes to speak to the issue and in the federal government 40 minutes.

I ask the members opposite and the people of Ontario, does it make sense to have 90 minutes as a lead speaker to an item? Most people would say no. If you can't say it in 30 or 40 minutes, what have you really got to say?

I can say that at the municipal level, the city of Metropolitan Toronto, for example, the speakers were allocated five minutes to speak on an issue, with a five-minute extension, for a total of 10 minutes. That may be a bit confining for this House, so I'm not suggesting that, but there is a major public corporation with elected representatives.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** They don't have the party system. They have independent members. Big difference.

**Hon David Johnson:** My friend from the Liberal back bench was there and he somehow managed to live within those rules and regulations, made an excellent contribution to the Metro council for many years and was restricted to speaking within the confines of five minutes plus five minutes, for 10 minutes in total, and yet we survived quite nicely.

What it meant, as Mr Colle will recall, was that many more members of the Metro council were involved in the debate. Of the 34 members of the Metro council, on a significant issue it was not unusual for at least 20 or two dozen members to be involved in the debate. Over half the members of the council would quite routinely get involved in the debate, because everybody had an opportunity and you didn't have one speaker dominating the floor for 90 minutes, taking up the large majority of the time.

In the case of the Legislature in fact three members can have 90 minutes each. Three members can dominate the entire debate and take up all that time, leaving very little time for the other members. That is an issue we intend to address through these rule changes.

Yes, there are more members of the federal House, but the fact remains that somehow there they are able to get



by quite nicely with 40 minutes for a lead speaker, 20 minutes for subsequent speakers until five hours of debate has occurred, and then 10 minutes for each speaker beyond that. In that manner, many more people have the opportunity.

It's important that members of this House have the opportunity to speak, because each and every one of us represents a different constituency. Under the present system, a very few speakers are permitted to dominate the speaking, the contribution in this House, and that means many of our constituencies are not represented in the debate. I don't think that's right and the government doesn't think that's right.

We think that more members representing more constituencies should be given the opportunity to participate in the debate. I think it's a very valid argument. It certainly works very well at the municipal level and it works very well at the federal level. The question is, if it works very well in all those other governments, why can't it work well here? What is different about this Legislature than the municipal councils —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Order. Interjections and so on — I understand that within the context of this there has to be some negotiation. I'll not allow that to be done across the floor.

**Mr Wildman:** There's no negotiation, Speaker. They brought it in as a motion.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. If you would like to speak, I would ask you to do it in the time that's allotted to you. In the meantime, I am required to have attention in this House so that I can hear the speaker. Thank you.  
1610

**Hon David Johnson:** This has been before us now for I believe three weeks. We have had a number of days of debate on it. The member for Nepean introduced the matter through his own report a week before that. There has been considerable thought and comment on it. There have been reports in the media, editorials, some in support, some expressing concern.

There have been discussions between the House leaders. As a result of those discussions, Mr Sampson, the member for Mississauga West, has brought in amendments. The opposition parties have said that's not enough. We have dealt with another amendment from the third party. They've brought in another amendment. I can say that the government has attempted to react to some of the concerns the opposition parties have brought forward.

The main concern at the beginning, the first concern, was that the government, through the process of having evening sessions constituting a separate sessional day, as, I might say, they have in British Columbia, an extra sessional day — again, this is not unique in Canada. The same sort of process takes place, with a bit of a variation, but there are two sessional days in British Columbia, as we're proposing, with the time being put in, 6:30 to 9:30 in the evening, three hours worth of time.

The concern was that the government, if it wished — and I must say that neither of the governments that have been associated with the time allocation motion have used, as far as I know, the minimum amount of time. I

don't believe the former government used the time allocation motion with the minimal amount of time, from second reading to third reading completion. That could involve as few as five days: three days of second reading debate, a fourth day for time allocation and the fifth day for the vote on the matter. So under the time allocation brought in by the previous government, it's possible to go from start of second reading to completion of third reading in five days. But I don't believe the former government rammed things through that quickly. I think they spread the time out. I think the former government spread the time out more. This government has certainly spread the time out more. We have not time-allocated strictly in a five-day period.

Nevertheless, the opposition parties have indicated that, technically, today it's possible to go through that process in five days. Under the procedures we have introduced, it would have been technically possible to reduce that by two days, to three days. Yes, that was true. It wasn't our intention to do that. We haven't taken advantage of that ability in the standing order procedures today. We didn't intend to do that in the procedures that we used. But we said, "Even though we don't intend to do that, to use that short period of time, we will make it abundantly clear that that cannot happen." So we brought in an amendment which would prohibit calling the same bill on the one day and thereby would ensure that the extended length of consideration for a bill was no shorter than it is today.

I think that's a good amendment. It's my strong belief that even with that, again, we will not use the minimum time. It is only to the advantage of a government to have debate over a period of time, to allow a bill to sink into the public consciousness, if you will, to get input through the public hearings process and to take advantage of that. We have done that.

I know the opposition parties don't like some of the legislation we've brought through, but I will say that over the past year we have generally agreed — not always, but generally — on the amount of committee public hearings time. There have been extensive public hearings which have been generally agreed by all three parties in terms of any number of bills: the Who Does What bills, for example, the amount of travel time, the amount of committee time in Metropolitan Toronto. There hasn't been agreement on each and every bill, but I would say on the majority of the bills there has been agreement on the public hearings. In fact, we've logged the hours of public hearings that we had in 1996, and they exceed the number of hours of public hearings that we've been able to find over the last 10 years or so. We've had more public hearings, that I've been able to determine, than either of the previous two governments. So I think we've taken excellent advantage of that.

There are other amendments that we did bring forward to try to accommodate some of the concerns of the opposition members. I realize the opposition parties are still not satisfied, but at some point in time the government needs the ability to go forward. We have had extensive debate now, well over 30 hours of debate, I think, approaching 40 hours of debate on this matter. The matter has been before the House for some three weeks or so, introduced through a report from the member for



Nepean even before that, in a sense, and I think the members have had good opportunity to participate.

I've also given my undertaking to the members of the other parties, through the House leaders, that over the course of the summer I'd be happy to get together with the other two House leaders to further discuss this matter and to see if we couldn't seek a resolution that would resolve some of the concerns the opposition members have or at least minimize some of the concerns they have. The undertaking is that if this motion is passed today, the actual vote on the standing order procedures wouldn't be until the House comes back in August, with 24 hours' notice to the opposition parties, after a summer recess period in which we would have the opportunity for further discussions. It's my hope in all of these matters that we can negotiate something that's acceptable to all parties. It's not always possible, but if we can do that, then I think that makes for a smoother running of the House.

Some of the other changes we feel are important involve the independent members of this House. At the present time, we do have one independent member. To some degree, the independent members do not have the same rights and privileges as other members of this House. For example, an independent member does not have a right to serve on a standing committee. This was studied back in 1992 under the former government. A report was brought forward, and we're proposing to introduce many of the rights which were reported on at that point in time through these House procedure changes. I think that's more democratic.

We are proposing that there actually be a vote on the budget. I think the general public would be greatly surprised to realize that over the last 10 years only in three years has there been a vote on the budget. I guess in one year there actually was no budget, so there was nothing to report on, but in seven of the last 10 years there has actually not been a vote on the budget in the province of Ontario. I think that would surprise and shock most of the people of the province. We are proposing, through the standing order procedures, that in fact we do have a vote on the budget, and the procedures we've brought forward would ensure that.

I think there are many good aspects to this process, to this motion that we're bringing forward, that all three parties would agree on.

I will limit my remarks today. I do note that somebody has given me a note saying that standing order changes have been addressed in the Canadian House of Commons on various dates over the past 20 or 30 years. In 1991, some changes were made involving debate for about 12 and a half hours. I think we have exceeded that by about three times the debate that they had in the House of Commons in 1991. I don't know how many hours of debate there were here in this House in 1992 when the standing order procedures were changed. I see some of the members opposite who were here at that point; perhaps they could advise me. I don't know, but I suspect it was not as long as the kind of debate we've had over the last three weeks.

1620

In the Saskatchewan Legislature in 1992, there were 20 hours of debate to effect changes to the standing order

procedures. Again we've exceeded that: almost double, I would say, by this point in time.

So we have put in a considerable amount of debate on this matter, much more so than many other jurisdictions. I think it's been useful. I don't begrudge the debating time. I do wish that we had been able to reach a closer agreement. Perhaps we'll do that over the summer months. I've indicated that my door is open, and let's talk. We'll be setting up meetings to try to effect a closer resolution, let's say, of our views on this matter.

At this time, I think I'll leave my comments at that. I know that many other members would wish to contribute to this debate as well.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on restricting the debate on the House rules. I think the public's eyes probably just glass over when they hear rule debates: "What in the world does that have to do with me and my life?" While we'll be here debating it, I think the public probably just wonders, "What are they spending their time on?"

I will just say to the public, this is all about giving Mike Harris a hammer to do exactly what he wants to do, and it's part of the theme. It's part of the theme of Mike Harris and his government. For the public I say once these House rules are passed, the government can ram its legislation through, and, in my opinion, in a quite undemocratic way.

Why are we all here? I hope we're all here and I think we all ran to serve the public. The public have a right to understand the legislation that is being proposed, have a right to comment on that legislation, have a right to have their input into that legislation, because we are doing it on their behalf.

Why in the world we would want to ram through things faster than the government has been moving is beyond me. I understand that Mike Harris may not like some of the opposition to his legislation. They want to have the tools to get this through a lot faster, but I don't think he has that right. I think the public have a right to input, to dialogue and discussion on legislation. We're in opposition. We are here to scrutinize what the government does, to point out the problems of the legislation and to try and improve it.

I will just use a few examples for the public because they probably say, "Well, you're just playing the role of opposition." I always say about Mike Harris's government: "Don't listen to what they say. Watch what they do." I'll give you a few examples.

Perhaps the first big example for us in the opposition was something called Bill 26, the omnibus bill. I remember — this is typical of the way Mike Harris operates — it was the day that a major economic statement was being prepared and presented. As a matter of fact, most of us, virtually all of us in the Legislature, were in something called a lockup. We were there being briefed on what was in the document. The government at 4 o'clock that day got up in the House to present that major statement, and sitting on our desks was this Bill 26 that became known as the bully bill, the omnibus bill. The government tried to ram that through with virtually no debate.

The reason I point that out is that one of the things in these rule changes takes away that right, that opportunity



that we used to delay the passage of Bill 26. Why is that important? Bill 26 was a mess. It was a complete mess. I don't know how the government got it prepared, but it was a disaster. We, through some extraordinary actions here — and I might say the public was mixed on that. I had phone calls saying: "What are you doing delaying this bill? We don't like the tactic you're using." But those people who objected to that tactic later phoned me and said, "You know, I didn't realize what was in that bill, and I'm glad you held it up."

If you'll remember, that bully bill went out to public hearings, which the government never wanted, around the province. The government itself was forced to bring in over 150 amendments to their own bill.

I say to the public, understand what the motive is for these rule changes. It is designed to allow Mike Harris to ram through his agenda and to take away any of the tools the opposition have to delay or to give a sober second thought. I would say on Bill 26 that all of the firefighters in this province, all of the health care workers, all of the public sector, all appreciated an opportunity for that bill to be changed and to be amended.

I might add that it was that bill that established the hospital restructuring commission and it was that bill, hastily put together — the government, I gather, still doesn't understand how it should deal with the hospital restructuring commission because it was, as I say, rammed together.

The rules themselves, I was suspicious. On federal election day, many of the members of the Legislature were in their ridings. I'm always cautious on a day when the media is diverted. That's when the government tries to do its less desirable work. Sure enough, 10 o'clock that morning, the government calls a press conference. They had a backbench member present them, but they were all rules that had been through the House leader's office and the Premier's office. They presented them as, "Here are some suggestions for improving the operation of the House." Clearly they were Mike Harris's rule changes to speed up the Legislature. It was no surprise to us, but the public should recognize it was no accident that that was presented federal election day when the government hoped they could get it shoved under the door with as little attention as possible.

I remember, by the way, that the government, through what's called the Who Does What work, planned to dump social assistance, child care and social housing on to the property taxpayer. David Crombie, the Who Does What panel head, the person handpicked by the Premier, along with the 14 other members of that Who Does What panel, was appalled by that. They said: "Al Leach is out of control here, dumping all of this on to property tax. We reject it. We think it is a ridiculous idea." What happened? Al Leach and his ministry scheduled a press conference for 3:30 on December 30. They sent Mr Crombie at 3:30 to a press conference, hoping no one would pay any attention.

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The reason I raise those is that all three of those are symptomatic of the way we see Mike Harris and his government working and the reason why we feel so strongly about these rule changes. I say to the public, you will only appreciate how dangerous these rule changes

are when the government puts through legislation that you find objectionable and you say to us in opposition: "Why did you let that go through? Why didn't you tell us about that? How could you possibly have seen that thing go through that fast and doing so much damage?"

I will say that when we get into debate on the labour legislation for many of the public servants and our teachers, there will be and there needs to be a sound debate on that, because the government is planning to take away fundamental rights from people. But they've now got the tools to ram that through. The public will say to us in opposition: "How could you let that happen? How could you not have alerted us to what the government was going to do to the people they serve?" We can never forget that that's why we're here. We aren't here to operate as a — "dictatorship" is too strong a word, but as a government that can do whatever it wants.

Yes, they're elected and they've got an overwhelming majority. They do have a right to implement their agenda. But they don't have a right to ram it through. I say to the public, if you want to know what this is all about, it is giving bully tools to the government. I'll take the example of Bill 26, the omnibus bill, the bully bill: that thick, Mr Speaker, as you remember, profound changes in legislation. They were going to ram that through with virtually no debate. My colleague Alvin Curling refused to leave the House and forced the debate. I thought it was instructive that Premier Harris the other day said, "the despicable act of Alvin Curling." That was not a despicable act; it was an act of courage that forced the debate on Bill 26.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Phillips:** There we are. Now the public should hear. The Conservative members now who were forced to acknowledge that Bill 26 was a mistake, badly done, are now barracking because Alvin Curling forced the debate on it, forced the government to slow down, forced the government to have hearings. The government itself: 150 amendments. I would say, when we're speaking about Bill 26, the omnibus bill, that we've had in the last 24 hours a dramatic demonstration of the impact of rushing legislation through.

I just want to go over that, because today in the House, in my opinion, there were some quotes made from the Integrity Commissioner that were not accurate. The Minister of Municipal Affairs did not quote the Integrity Commissioner accurately. He needs to correct the record for the public watching this.

What is this all about? I'll go back to this Bill 26, the bully bill. It set up a hospital restructuring commission. We were told when we were in the debate on that bill: "This will be an independent, arm's-length agency. It will make all the decisions on hospital closings, and the cabinet will have no opportunity to influence its decisions." That's what we were told. Many of us in the opposition, both parties, warned the government. We said, "Listen, a hospital is perhaps the most important facility in many communities." Certainly I can guarantee you that if you or your loved one is ill, there is no more important building than the hospital. Nothing else matters but that facility and the care. Nothing. We've all been through that with loved ones.



We said: "Listen, these institutions belong to the public. They have a right to have a say in the operation of them. That's why they're there. That's why they're publicly funded. You can't turn that over to some arm's-length agency that is removed from the public. The public want a say in that finally. It may be difficult, it may be stressful, but they want a say in it."

But the government said: "No, we are removing the cabinet from this. The cabinet will have no influence on it." We argued against it. We said to the hospitals, "It may be neat and tidy, but it's not the way that the public want their business done." The public want somehow or other to have a say in those facilities. But no. The government said, "There will be an arm's-length agency set up."

We find out now that this was not the case, and this is what the problem is with Mr Leach. Minister Leach has sent a letter to the commission. It may have been supporting a worthy cause, and that is delaying the commission from its recommendations, and we may very well support the intent of the letter, but the fact is that for the people in my community who I've told, "Listen, the cabinet has no influence over them. The decision is final. We have been assured the cabinet won't have its fingers into it," now we find that Minister Leach did.

Then, in a very strongly worded report by the commissioner, he says, "...in the present situation is also a flagrant breach of parliamentary convention in that the HSRC was set up as an independent quasi-judicial tribunal to operate at arm's length from government," and that the minister's office should indicate that an intervention is not possible by any minister. It goes on to say, "I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach contravened the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 by communicating..."

The public may say: "What's the big deal? So he wrote a letter to the commission on behalf of a local hospital." I'll say what the big deal is: He broke the act. You can't do that.

Then the minister said today in the Legislature that the Integrity Commissioner said, in his opinion, he shouldn't resign as minister. The Integrity Commissioner said no such thing. The Integrity Commissioner said that he has no authority to determine whether or not Mr Leach should stay in cabinet, and I was amazed today for the minister to, in my opinion, misquote the Integrity Commissioner.

The minister is here now. I asked him earlier if he would correct the record, and maybe he will later. This is the Integrity Commissioner: "Whether a member of the executive council remains in cabinet is not a matter for my office." That is not the Integrity Commissioner's business. Whether the member remains a member is, but not whether he remains in cabinet. "It would not be correct to draw any inference that my recommendation that no penalty be imposed has any relationship to a member's status as a member of the executive council."

Again, the reason I raise that is I go back to the public watching this debate, and I think the public would say: "Listen, we want our public institutions to function effectively. We want them to operate smoothly. We want them to be efficient." Be aware that we are dealing with a government that is on a mission. They're on a mission, as they just acknowledged.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** The Common Sense Revolution.

**Mr Phillips:** The Common Sense Revolution. Exactly. There it is. The mission means that anybody who gets in their way, too bad; we will run roughshod over you.

I had a local school principal — and I'll just give you an example of why I feel so strongly — who sent a letter out to her community indicating concerns about the implications of cutbacks. I read the letter. By the way, I'd never met the principal until after this incident. What happened? Mr Snobelen's political staff phoned that principal up and said: "Listen, you stop that. You stop that or, firstly, I'll report you to your superior officer and, secondly, I'll talk to a reporter in one of the local papers who will write a story about it."

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**Mr Klees:** That's harassment.

**Mr Phillips:** Harassment. As a matter of fact, now that we're on the subject and now that Mr Klees has decided to get into this, the Integrity Commissioner was asked to look at another circumstance around Mr Leach.

The reason I raise all of this is because if you wonder why we in opposition feel so strongly about these rule changes, we have a belief about the way the government operates and we know that they are determined to have their way regardless. We happen to think democracy works a little differently.

But another example, Mr Leach himself: There was a legal suit, a legal action taken by a parents' group. There was a community school in Metropolitan Toronto and the community group felt they were not having input into the government's plans on education, so they engaged a lawyer to try and slow the process down and that lawyer began action against the government. What happened? Minister Leach didn't like that, so Minister Leach had his executive assistant phone the law firm and say to the partners, the senior people in that law firm: "What's going on here? Is this serious? Is this just a joke?" The long and the short of it was that the lawsuit stopped, the person involved in it left the firm and the matter then dropped. The point is that it was totally inappropriate for the government to use its clout to phone the law firm and, whether they realize it or not, and I have to believe they would, put pressure on them. That was the second instance with Mr Leach.

The Integrity Commissioner said this about Mr Leach having his executive assistant phone up: "The commissioner considered the fourth principle in the preamble to the integrity act: 'Members are expected to act with integrity and impartiality that will bear the closest public scrutiny.'" Then he goes on to say, "In my opinion, such comments were inappropriate and do not reflect the proper appreciation of the preamble."

In other words, the Integrity Commissioner looked at the way Minister Leach handled this situation, where a community group had engaged a lawyer to attempt to slow the government down. What happens? The government gets senior people to phone the law firm, the partners, and say, "Are you serious about doing this?" The Integrity Commissioner said it was inappropriate, not consistent with the act.

Yesterday, in response to the minister sending a letter to the hospital restructuring commission, the Integrity



Commissioner had to conclude: "I am satisfied that the Honourable Allan Leach contravened the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, by communicating with the chair of the Health Services Restructuring Commission."

I go back to why this is important. It's important because Ontario was told that the government was going to set up this hospital restructuring commission, that there would be no political interference, it was at arm's length, it would not have the cabinet putting pressure on it. I accepted that and I told people that. I didn't agree with it, but I accepted that.

What are we to say now? My community will say it sure looks like the cabinet that set up this body — in fact there were three cabinet ministers writing to the commission, and Justice Evans said it was totally inappropriate. He went on to say the minister may have been — I think he had some comments about the minister's background here. He said maybe it's excusable because in organizations like the TTC "it would be most unusual if top-level management people did not acquire an attitude that resents any limitations which they perceive as an unwarranted obstruction in the attainment of their particular goals." Fairly strong language, actually, what the Integrity Commissioner said: It would be sort of strange if top-level management like Mr Leach didn't get an attitude that resents any limitations which they perceive as an unwarranted obstruction in the attainment of their particular goals.

The fact is that the minister should never have written that letter. He played a major role in the legislation setting up the hospital restructuring commission. He writes the legislation, plays a big role in it, and then he breaks the law. People may say, "Why are you making a big deal about all of this?" It's all about trust in the hospital restructuring commission and its impartiality. I will just say that now, whether the commission likes it or not, its recommendations will have a taint because it has now become public that there are three examples of the cabinet interfering in it.

I was very surprised today to hear the minister saying that the commissioner said no penalties should be imposed. The commissioner was extremely clear. He said: "I'm not recommending that he lose his seat. I'm not recommending that there be a penalty imposed as a member, but I have no authority about how he deals with his cabinet role."

The reason I went through all of that is to point out to the public that this is the backdrop against which we evaluate the rule changes, and that backdrop is a history of, "If you get in our way, we have our ways of dealing with you." I go back to that school principal in my area, that community group that engaged the lawyer; Bill 26; the Who Does What group. An additional one is the whole issue of how the government is dealing with the Ipperwash situation. The reason I raise this is because it is a metaphor, in my opinion, for how the government deals with people who get in its way. I raise Ipperwash because it has become a symbol of the Harris government.

To refresh your memory, Mr Speaker, on Labour Day, September 4, 1995, about two years ago, after Ipperwash Provincial Park had closed — that's traditionally the end

of the camping season — a group of first nations moved into Ipperwash Provincial Park. They went in there because they believed and had evidence that there was a sacred native burial ground there that was being desecrated and they went in to secure that. The government handling of that ultimately will be fully exposed once we have a public inquiry, but the following is clear.

That occupation took place on Labour Day in 1995 around 6 o'clock in the evening. The government began to hold high-level meetings immediately, and on September 5 there was an emergency planning for aboriginal issues interministerial committee meeting. The Premier's executive assistant was at that and someone from cabinet office, along with a series of other people, including one elected member who is the Legislature right now. Those meetings started on September 5; they ran for several hours. They met again on September 6 for several hours and then at about 11 o'clock on September 6 there was a confrontation between the OPP and the first nations, and a first nations called Dudley George died as a result of that.

The reason I raise all of this is that the way the government handled that is, as I say, perhaps a metaphor for the government. They decided to ignore the first nations claim that there was a burial ground there and simply say, "This is a group of people who are trespassing illegally." That was the first mistake. Had they treated it and dealt with it as a first nations issue it would have been handled very differently.

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The second thing they did, and it's in these minutes, was that the government said, "The province will take steps to remove the occupiers ASAP." That decision taken by the government was the key decision, in my opinion, that led to the confrontation. They said, "The OPP will have the discretion as to how to remove" — not whether; how to remove — "the Stony Pointers from the park." The reason I'm spending time on this is because it is, as I say, a symbol of the government that we believe we are dealing with.

Throughout this period the local Conservative member was at the police command post on a regular basis, and as a matter of fact was very active in the circumstances. This is the headline from the day the shooting took place on September 6, and the headline says, "Queen's Park to Take a Hard Line Against Park Occupiers: Beaubien."

Here we have at a police command post, dealing with one of the toughest, most sensitive situations, an elected member of the government, on a regular basis. I think it's unacceptable. I can just imagine that if there was a confrontation — let's take a labour dispute, where there's a confrontation between a corporation and striking employees of some sort. Would it ever be acceptable for an elected member to be at the police command post saying, "We're going to take a hard line with these people," or "I've been talking to the Solicitor General, the Attorney General and the Premier's office and I am faxing them my intentions"?

I see, Mr Speaker, you want me to move back on to the House rules, but the reason I raise the Ipperwash situation —

*Applause.*



**Mr Phillips:** Mr Leach is sitting over there clapping, and the public will want to know that. Mr Leach clapping over there will want to know that they don't want to hear about Ipperwash.

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think it's appropriate for the honourable member to leave the impression with this House that it was Mr Leach who was clapping. It was not Mr Leach, and I think we should put that on the record.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** That's not a point of order.

**Mr Phillips:** I know the government doesn't want to hear about Ipperwash, but I will just say to you it will not go away. The Premier has said he has no records on Ipperwash, despite the fact that his executive assistant and communications person were at daily meetings, running often for three hours on the most serious situation facing the government. We had back from the Premier, "My staff kept no records, no files, no memo, no e-mail, no briefing note." That is for us too incredible to believe.

The reason I raised Ipperwash is for the public. I hope they appreciate that the reason we feel so strongly about these rules is that they give the government another tool to silence another form of opposition for them, in this case the opposition parties. I mentioned earlier how this is a typical tactic. The government planned to dump on to municipalities over \$1 billion of added costs. As I said before, first the Who Does What panel tried to alert the public to what the government was doing. But the government set up the time for the press conference. When did they do it? December 30, 3:30 in the afternoon here at Queen's Park, in an attempt to silence the opposition and silence Mr Crombie.

Then the government introduced this downloading, this dumping, and tried to ram it through. We in the opposition said: "No, this is wrong. The Who Does What panel says it's wrong. You can't dump \$1 billion of new costs on to municipalities, all social housing, social assistance, child care." The government said, "No, you're all wrong, opposition; It isn't \$1 billion," etc. Fortunately the opposition, because we still had some ways to slow them down, forced some time on it and the government finally said: "We were wrong; you were right, opposition. It is \$1 billion. We're now going to change our minds."

Do you remember at one time they were going to take all education off residential property tax? The government didn't have its numbers right. They found out they couldn't do it, and of course they finally backed down on it. But it was only because the opposition pointed it out that we travelled around the province — we couldn't get the Conservatives to agree to it, but we travelled around the province — in community after community, and every single community said, "This is a huge mistake."

Now the government has partially backed down. They are still adding \$660 million on to property tax. Mr Klees is over there. I am anxiously awaiting a year from now, when the full impact of your dumping \$660 million of costs on to property tax is felt.

I will say to the people, I remember well. This is why you're trying to ram through the Common Sense Revolution, but in the Common Sense Revolution you said you

wouldn't hurt seniors. A majority of social housing, assisted housing that the province helps to fund, is for seniors. What's happening? A hundred per cent is being dumped on to the property tax.

Mr Klees says, "Oh, they won't be hurt." Seniors don't believe that and municipal leaders don't believe that. Municipal leaders say you're wrong, you've made a huge mistake here. But why is it happening? I'll tell you why it's happening, and we all know: The government has to fund its tax cut, so it's funding it by dumping on to municipalities. The government says it's going to dump \$900 million of social housing on to the property tax. When the public recognize that, I think they will recognize the reason their property taxes are going up.

The province has decided it's going to solve its fiscal problems. It's going to find the money to fund the tax cut by dumping it on to property tax. I repeat: Without some techniques to slow the government down, they would run roughshod over the public. I've already mentioned the case of Bill 26, the omnibus bill. The only way we could slow them down, the only way — we had run out of any other device — was through the device Mr Curling used. The government doesn't like that.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** A shameful business.

**Mr Phillips:** Just so everybody knows, the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale says it's shameful.

The government was going to ram that thing through and the only technique was that one.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Phillips:** I think the public will appreciate what we're facing here: Some of the government members want to have that kind of hammer to ram things through. We don't think it's right. As someone once said — I think it was my colleague Mr Wildman — no one out there is saying the government is moving too slowly.

I go back to, had we not had some ways of slowing the government down, they would have dumped over \$1 billion of new costs on to municipalities. As it is, they're still going to dump \$660 million, but at least we were able to slow that down.

I want to talk a little bit about another matter, and that is the megacity. The reason I raise the megacity is that I remember the report that was prepared before the last provincial election by the Mike Harris Task Force on Metro. That's what it was called. I live in Metro. I watched this very carefully. I think I know the feelings of many people. I remember that task force report. By the way, one of the co-chairs was Al Leach. It said this: We will retain all six existing municipalities — Scarborough, East York, North York, Etobicoke, York and the city of Toronto — and we will get rid of Metro.

People in Scarborough bought that. They thought: "Gee, that's what Mike Harris believes. That's what we want." There are four members from Scarborough now.

**1700**

I liked it partially because of that. I remember that well, because there was a debate around here about which level of government to get rid of and Mike was very clear on that. Lo and behold, in the middle of December, we find that Mike Harris changed his mind and was



going to get rid of the six area municipalities and move to one Metro government.

The thing that I found objectionable is that he ran on one platform and he's doing exactly the opposite. I was surprised that this was the decision he took. I was surprised that he changed his mind and I was surprised that the government wanted to ram it through.

It was only through extraordinary action by the opposition that there was some semblance of debate on it and there was time for expression from the public. The public, of course, overwhelmingly said, "We don't like it," but the government ignored all that.

I raise that one because when the government decides to do exactly the opposite of what it said before the election — it's bad enough to be ramming through legislation that goes in the same direction as the government was heading, but to go exactly the opposite and then want to put it through in a very short period, affecting the most successful urban area in North America, I just don't think is right.

First, I think the public understands clearly what this is all about. This is all about Mike Harris having the tools to run roughshod over the opposition. I repeat: It's a dangerous day when governments think that only they know best and all they need is the tools to get this stuff through in a hurry because the public finally will understand after the fact that the government knew best. I think the public knows best. I think it's the public who understand these things and I think the public has a right to input, debate and understand what their government is doing to them.

The reason the government is ramming its agenda through is because it does have to make its cuts to find the money for the tax cut. Come next Tuesday, I guess, another phase of the tax cut goes through and the average taxpayer will be getting about \$1.44 more a week in income, a large or medium-sized coffee.

**Mr Klees:** You'd take it away.

**Mr Phillips:** The member says we'd take it away. I would just say this. First, I think the public understands that here in the Legislature we have a view and the government has a view and we get into it. But the three credit rating agencies that have commented on Ontario's finances — and this is their business; they get paid to do this — what do they say about the tax cut? All three of them have expressed reservations, saying —

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** Tell us what we're borrowing at, Gerry.

**Mr Phillips:** The House whip has encouraged me to talk about how much we're borrowing, and I'll get to that.

All three credit rating agencies have looked at the finances of the government. I remember that Mike Harris used to rail at Bob Rae. He'd say: "Bob, your credit rating is totally unacceptable. You're losing the confidence of the world financial community."

What happened? We're now two years into the government's mandate. Moody's, Standard and Poor's, Dominion Bond Rating Service, three of the four largest credit rating agencies, have all looked at Mike Harris' finances and said, "We'll give you the same credit rating we gave Bob Rae," two years into your mandate.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Phillips:** I know the government members don't want to hear this. I always say to my business friends, "Don't assume they know how to run the business; you watched what Mulroney did," and you people are not unlike Mulroney. He never made a dent in the deficit. I know people like Jim Wilson used to work for the Mulroney group, so they might bring the same attitude.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Would the member for Scarborough just come back to the topic.

**Mr Phillips:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The rule changes were introduced by someone who worked in the Mulroney government.

The reason I raise the credit rating is because the rule changes are all about forcing the government's agenda through much faster. Look at this, ladies and gentlemen: Why do the three credit rating agencies give Mike Harris the same credit rating as Bob Rae? All three of them said the tax cut is risky. Every penny of the tax cut is borrowed, every penny. As a matter of fact, you can see that over the next three years — the first four budgets of Mike Harris take the deficit up \$21 billion. The tax cut over that period of time will cost \$9 billion in lost revenue.

I say to my friends, yes, everybody wants a tax cut. Those people making —

*Applause.*

**Mr Phillips:** Yes, Mr Klees. Those people making more than a quarter of a million dollars a year are going to get \$500 million of a tax break, we understand that. But I just say to all of us that if the deficit is so important that people on social assistance, children, have to get by with 20% less, and the majority of people on social assistance are children — "You've got to get by with 20% less because we've got this deficit we've got to fight." To the seniors: "We told you we would not impose a user fee. We're sorry. We've changed our mind. We're going to put a user fee on." To all the senior citizens who rely on social housing, and the majority of social housing is for seniors, "Sorry, but we're going to dump that on to the property tax." Why? "We've got to find \$500 million for a tax break for people making more than a quarter of a million dollars."

The great business minds in the government have said: "We've got to fight this deficit, so we're going to cut social assistance, we're going to close hospitals, we are going to put user fees on seniors, we are going to put user fees on all sorts of services, we are going to cut education. We are going to see" — I'll use the example of tuition fees going from \$3,000 a year to \$18,000 a year. That's under Mike Harris. Why? "We've got to find the money for the tax cut."

I say about the tax cut, come Tuesday —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. You'll have the chance to come back, if you wish. If you want to debate, just wait your turn.

**Mr Phillips:** That's very good, Mr Speaker. I thought that rule changes were all —

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** This is why we need the rule changes, because of this kind of waste of time.



**Mr Phillips:** The member may not like what I'm saying because it's striking home, which is this: Three credit rating agencies have said —

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I'll send you a copy of the statement.  
1710

**Mr Phillips:** Mr Leach is barking, and I appreciate that. He is the same one who today said the Integrity Commissioner said he shouldn't step down as the minister. I don't think the Integrity Commissioner ever said that and I challenge Mr Leach to prove that.

**Hon Mr Leach:** I can send you over a copy of the statement.

**Mr Phillips:** Mr Leach, you said something in the House that is not fact, not accurate. I understand why, and the public can, I think, now hear the government barking, because this is typical. They would like to silence the opposition from saying this.

**Mr Flaherty:** You've been talking for half an hour. What are you talking about?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Phillips:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The public I think now understands the tactics: Silence the opposition. If a principal says something you don't like, phone that principal up and threaten them, threaten them to go to their boss; threaten that you'll get a reporter on them. If you don't like what a lawyer is doing, phone the senior partners up.

**Mr Flaherty:** I want you to speak to the motion.

**Mr Phillips:** Mr Flaherty, I understand you may not want to hear about the bully tactics, but we see them out there — phone the law firm up.

**Mr Wildman:** What this is really about is, when you don't like what somebody says, "Shut up."

**Mr Phillips:** Exactly. So I go back to, why are you doing this? Because you want to silence opposition wherever it is, because Mike Harris wants to ram through the revolution. I would say I fundamentally disagree with much in the revolution, but you won and we lost. I know what the revolution is all about.

I remember clearly — I say this often to my friends, because my friends say: "Listen, I thought Bill Davis was a fairly moderate person. I thought the Progressive Conservative Party was a progressive party." I say: "This isn't the Progressive Conservative Party. This was an agenda written to keep Preston Manning from running candidates in the last provincial election and it worked." That's why Mike Harris is Premier and that's why Jean Charest is quite angry, because Mike said, "If you don't come in here, we'll give you the Common Sense Revolution and" —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Back to the rules.

**Mr Phillips:** Mr Speaker, you're saying to get back to the rules, but I think the public understands what this government is all about, and it is bullying their way through on their agenda.

**Mr Hastings:** You were bullying with the land tax.

**Mr Phillips:** There is the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, Mr Hastings, is barking again. I say to the public that this is exactly why they want to change the rules: so they can force their will on people faster.

I want to go back to the government's financial plans and say that the tax cut — the three credit rating agencies

we've already talked about — recognized that every single penny of this tax cut is money that has to be borrowed. I understand that the tax cut was perhaps the central reason why you got elected, but the people who look at this objectively say it's a big mistake.

I wanted to talk briefly as well about the ruling that came down very recently from the Grievance Settlement Board. The reason I raise this is that again it's symptomatic of a government that is ramming its way through. The government negotiated a deal with the public sector. Our public servants were out on strike, I guess, for seven or eight weeks, a very difficult strike for them, and one of the things they thought they had secured in their agreement was some protection during privatization. The government is determined to take public jobs and turn them over to the private sector, and our union said, "We need some protection when that happens in terms of your making a reasonable effort to accommodate us."

I think in quite a shocking development, something called the Grievance Settlement Board looked at the performance of the government in this area. This is serious because it is symptomatic of the way the government treats its employees. The people who work for the public are our most valuable asset. We are, after all, employing on behalf of the public literally public servants. They have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and they expect the government to live up to the agreement it signed. They thought at least you would live up to the settlement that Mike Harris finally was able to, in many respects, force on the public servants.

But what happened? The Grievance Settlement Board looked at two cases where the government was dealing with its employees and said: "You're not dealing fairly with them. You're not living up to the contract." Both of the awards — this is from the government itself to its senior staff — from the settlement board found that the employer had failed to make reasonable efforts and satisfy its obligations under the collective agreement. "The awards direct the employer to apply the following principles in the application of its 'reasonable efforts' obligation."

What does that mean in simple terms? As we all know, our public servants went through a very, very traumatic strike. They saw what was coming, which is a dramatic downsizing, a dislocation in the public service, a loss of a lot of jobs, and they tried their best to negotiate some dignity for their members. The government was found by an independent, quasi-judicial board to have concluded that the government, the employer, had failed to make reasonable efforts to satisfy its obligations under the collective agreement.

Again I'll raise this because it is symptomatic of a government that, whoever gets in its way — whether, in my opinion, it be the first nations at Ipperwash, whether it be a hospital that has a problem, whether it be the Who Does What panel, whether it be the hospital restructuring commission, whether it be the Burk's Falls Hospital or whether it be our own collective agreement with our employees, and finally, of course, whether it be the opposition — will do what it takes to silence them.

I know from dealing with the public and people in my area that rule changes are not front and centre in their



daily lives. As a matter of fact, they probably wonder what we are debating here. "Why the big fuss?" Our caucus one day walked out of question period; another day the NDP did. "Why are you going through all of this? Isn't this just histrionics and isn't this inappropriate in the Legislature?"

I know for a fact that after the bully bill was stalled I got literally hundreds of people telling me: "Thank you for slowing that down. Thank you for giving us a chance to find out what was in it and thank you for forcing the government to admit it made many mistakes." The bill never got fixed in the way that in our opinion it should have been but the government was forced to bring in 150 amendments.

As a matter of fact, I remember that the amendments had to be in by 4 o'clock. I can remember sitting in the committee room dealing with them, and they were caught in a traffic jam somewhere and literally came through the door at 4 o'clock with a series of other — and do you know what they were? They were dealing with the privacy records of patients in hospitals. The government was going to close hospitals and they didn't have in the bill any way of ensuring that the records of people who were patients in those hospitals were protected. It was a dangerous, dangerous piece of work.

1720

But there it was. I kid you not. Literally at one minute to 4 they finally came through the door. It was only, I might add, because we phoned the privacy commissioner at about 3:30 to say, "Are you satisfied with what's here?" The privacy commissioner said, "No, I'm not," so they were forced to draft amendments at exactly the last moment.

The public, as I say, must wonder what we are doing here and why this big debate on the rules bill. It's precisely for that reason. I appreciated what the Integrity Commissioner said because he may have got it right in his report. The Integrity Commissioner points out the difference between a public institution and others. He's referring to Mr Leach. He said maybe it's because he'd been in another organization:

"Its rules are those of the marketplace — a constant competitive struggle to survive or to improve. In such an atmosphere, it would be unusual if top-level management people did not acquire an attitude that resents any limitations which they perceive as an unwarranted obstruction in the attainment of their particular goals."

I think what we've got here is that Mike Harris sees the rules here as a limitation which he perceives as an unwarranted obstruction of his attainment of his particular goals. But for the public, surely what you want is an opportunity for legislation to be reviewed properly and thoroughly when there's legislation that's introduced that's inappropriate, for some way to slow it down.

I remember saying to the finance minister, Mr Eves, the other day, "Why do you need these rules?" He said, "There will be occasions when we've got to get things through very quickly." "Yes, but on major bills why would you need these rules?" "Well, we'd never use them. We'd never use them in those cases." I say to the public, that was quite chilling for me because the government wants rules and says: "Don't worry. We'll never use

them." If you'll never use them, don't ask for them because it illustrates that you will perhaps use them.

On the rule changes, just to review our concerns, there's no question of what they're all about. The fact that they were introduced the morning of the federal election, when many were preoccupied — I was in my office and I got a call about a half-hour before the media conference to say that they were being introduced. I went down. We found out that they were rules that had been through the House leader's office, they'd had their scrutiny. They were clearly the government rules designed to thwart and to silence the opposition.

You wonder why we are so suspicious of the government? I go through the things we've experienced: the bully bill that they attempted to present to us after we'd been locked up in a briefing session most of the day, and the initial demand was that it be passed very quickly; the experience with the Who Does What panel; the experience I've had on Ipperwash; the experience we've had in dealing with the Integrity Commissioner over the last day here; the experience I've had with the principal in my own area; all of the experience I've had with megacity — all examples where the government was determined to ram through its agenda.

As I begin to wrap up, you can I hope appreciate that we resent the government trying to gag the opposition. I happen to think the opposition plays an important role. I've been on both sides. I was in government and I've been in opposition. I'd rather be in government, but I don't make that decision on my own. I can tell you that regardless of who's in government, a crucial role is an effective opposition that challenges the government. A government that attempts to eliminate opposition simply says that it is more interested in ramming through its agenda than in ensuring that the public has a legitimate debate around legislation. The package of rule changes, every one of them, is designed primarily to lessen the role of opposition, some of them designed to give the government back bench more opportunity, but all of them designed to lessen the role of the opposition.

What this province does not need is less scrutiny of this government. The last thing Mike Harris needs is less scrutiny of what he's doing. What this province needs and demands is more scrutiny. I understand why Mike Harris may not want it. I understand why he may want to change the rules. I understand why he's done the things he's done with other groups. Because he's determined to get his way regardless. As I say, the last thing Ontario needs is to turn out more lights and darken the scrutiny of the Harris government.

We resent this. The government will have its way here. The public should know this, that in the end they will have their way, but I will just say to them, you are sewing the seeds of bigger problems for yourselves because in the end the public will demand scrutiny and the public will demand that you not ram through things.

You may think this is a victory for you. When you get these rules passed, you'll head down to your caucus room and you'll celebrate, but it'll be a very hollow victory and it will be a sad day when the rule changes are finally passed. The opposition will simply have to find different ways of expressing the public's view, but you create a



bigger problem for yourselves with less scrutiny of Mike Harris's government, and I personally resent what the government's doing here.

**Mr Wildman:** I rise to participate in this debate, and I must say that I feel some considerable resentment about having to participate in this discussion today, the last day the House sits in June prior to our coming back in August.

I want to talk about the reasons for that frustration and regret. There are a number of things I want to put on the table for discussion this afternoon and evening. The first will deal with what we should be talking about this afternoon, the last day of the session. We will be talking about the things we could have been dealing with. I'll also be pointing out a number of things that are wrong with the motion before us and a number of things that are wrong with the approach the government is taking.

I hope the government members who are present will understand that I will attempt not to be repetitious and that I'm putting forward these views with all sincerity, and hopefully some of the government members may in fact listen. I don't expect them necessarily to agree with me, but I hope some of the things I raise will give them pause to consider.

We are here this afternoon debating a time allocation motion — the last day of the session, time allocation. The member for Don Mills has moved a motion for "resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for adoption of amendments to the standing orders...." The motion says, "The Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion and any amendments thereto...without further amendment or debate. If a recorded vote is required, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes" and the vote cannot be deferred. This motion was tabled on June 23, 1997, in the House.

1730

This time allocation motion deals with the proposed changes to the standing orders which govern how this assembly operates, so some people might find it rather strange that on the last day of the session we are debating a time allocation motion which will determine what the government can do when the government comes back in August. I think most people who might be observing this debate would think that it's reasonable for the government to want to get a number of pieces of legislation that it has on the order paper passed before the end of the session. It would be reasonable to expect that at the end of a session there might be a number of things that the government would like to get cleaned up that it hasn't been able to get through during the session and would ask the opposition to consider these bills and get them through.

But the government House leader has chosen not to follow that route. The government House leader has chosen instead to debate a time allocation motion which will determine something that'll happen in August when the House comes back. As a result, a large number of bills that the government has been saying are very important to the government and to the people of Ontario will not be dealt with.

On a personal note, I will express regret for being here this afternoon and evening. I had the good fortune to be

invited by a friend of mine named Ted Nolan to participate in his celebrity golf tournament this weekend, which is starting in the Sault today. I had the opportunity to be seated at a table at the dinner this evening with Bobby Orr, and I know Bobby Orr will be very disappointed that I can't make it because I have to participate in this debate. Frankly, I'm disappointed. I would have liked to have had the opportunity to participate in that function.

I want to say, if I can, congratulations to Ted Nolan for holding this tournament. I'll explain that. All of you know who Ted Nolan is. Ted Nolan is the most successful coach in the National Hockey League. He is a constituent of mine. He lives at Garden River; he's a member of the Garden River First Nation. His older brother was an even closer friend of mine until his unfortunate untimely death a few years ago.

Ted Nolan's golf tournament is held annually to raise money for aboriginal women who are going on to higher education. It is dedicated to Rose Nolan, who was Ted's mother, who died in an automobile accident a number of years ago on Highway 17 in the Garden River reserve. Mrs Nolan was a well-known matriarch of that community, was the mother of 12 children, one of whom is Ted. She was a wonderful lady and someone we all grieve for and miss. I really congratulate Ted for arranging this celebrity tournament every year to raise funds for young aboriginal women to be able to extend their education, and I regret not being able to be there this evening.

Parenthetically, I would say that it seems very strange to me that the most successful coach in the NHL does not have a contract, but I guess it's not appropriate for me to comment on that this evening.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Are you negotiating for him?

**Mr Wildman:** It's none of my business to interfere in these negotiations. I have enough trouble in negotiations around this place. But I wish Ted well and I hope the tournament goes well and that he raises a lot of money. That tournament is designed to raise funds in memory of Rose Nolan, who died in an automobile accident on the Garden River reserve. I wonder why we are not debating something that deals with road safety today. It would have made more sense, to me, for us in this assembly to be passing into law the road safety bill.

This is a bill that the Minister of Transportation first proposed back in February, because we had seen a number of truck wheels fly off of trucks on highways in Ontario. While they caused many accidents, a number of them caused fatalities. The Minister of Transportation first brought forward a bill which he said would deal with this specific problem and he wanted to pass it immediately and he wanted the opposition to agree, but the government House leader, for reasons that are inexplicable, refused to bring forward that piece of legislation.

Subsequently, the minister and the government decided they wanted what they referred to as a comprehensive bill on road safety that dealt not only with flying truck wheels but with a number of safety issues related to school bus safety and to prevention of drunk driving. All of us agreed that this was a bill that deserved support. When this bill was brought forward by the government both opposition parties repeatedly got up and said, "Why



don't you bring forward your road safety bill for quick passage?"

Initially, the opposition agreed to allow that bill to go through in one afternoon. We said the government could get second reading and third reading in one day. Then the government and the opposition House leaders agreed that perhaps that wasn't the best way to approach it, that it probably would be better to have a few days, a very short period, for committee hearings so that the victims of flying truck wheels, the police, MADD and other groups interested in preventing drunk driving would be able to make presentations to the committee so we could see if there should be improvements to that legislation.

The opposition and government House leaders agreed that we would have committee hearings, but we assured the government House leader that when the committee completed its work and the government called the road safety bill we would pass the third reading in one day. So why are we debating a time allocation motion on rule changes on the last day of the session, June 26?

We are just about to go into the tourist season. Students are on vacation or just beginning their vacation. I know the pages are looking forward to having some time off and not being around this zoo all the time. There are going to be lots of people on vacation and there's going to be a lot of traffic on the highways. Why is it that the government has not called the road safety bill as the first order of business today, the last day of the session? The government has a commitment from the opposition parties that that bill will be passed in one day.

I know the government doesn't like the current rules. The current rules say that in the last two weeks of the session, after the government has introduced a motion, we sit until midnight. But a sitting that goes from the end of question period, usually around 3:30, to midnight is one day. This government doesn't like that. They don't like seeing eight hours as a day, ignoring the fact, despite what members on the opposite side have said, that eight hours is a normal working day for most people.

Apparently the government does not want to call the road safety bill as the first order of business today, June 26, because they don't want to take possibly a full eight hours to discuss that and pass it so that it can be law before the tourist season this summer.

What does this mean for road safety in the province? It means that the regulations around liability for flying truck wheels, for improper maintenance of trucks, improper operation of trucks, the legislation for dealing with drunk driving and preventing drunk driving and increasing the penalties for drunk drivers and the legislation that deals with school bus safety will not be in effect in July. It will not have become law despite the fact the government knows it had a commitment from the two opposition parties that the bill would be passed in one day, and it could have been passed today. Again, the commitment was for one day's debate, and one day's debate, thanks to the government motion today and for the rest of the days in the last two weeks, goes until midnight.

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I challenge any of the members of the government to explain why we are not debating the road safety bill today so that it can be in place before people are going on vacation, before we have tourists coming and we have

a significant increase in traffic on our highways and side roads and concession roads in this province. Why has this government not got its priorities straight? Why is it a greater priority for the Conservative government to have a time allocation motion debated the last day of the session in June rather than road safety, a bill they say is a high priority? Despite the rhetoric from the Minister of Transportation that this is a high priority for the Conservative government, we've seen how low a priority it really is. The fact is that this government is not particularly interested in road safety. This government doesn't think it's important enough to debate it on the last day of the session in June.

There are not many things I agree with the Minister of Transportation about. Road safety is one. Another is his anger at the government House leader, which he expressed to the press outside this chamber earlier today. As I understand it, the Minister of Transportation, Mr Palladini, expressed serious concern about the fact that the government House leader had chosen to call this time allocation motion rather than Bill 138, the road safety bill. I agree with Mr Palladini on this. It appears that road safety, dealing with flying truck wheels, dealing with drunk driving this summer, is important to Mr Palladini, the Minister of Transportation, but it's not important to the rest of his colleagues and it's certainly not important to the government House leader.

I hope the members of MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, understand that the reason we don't have a road safety bill in place for this summer, for this July, is because the government House leader doesn't think it's important enough. He hasn't thought it was important enough since February. He hasn't called it. Repeatedly has been asked by the opposition to call it, and repeatedly he hasn't.

I suspect I know why he hasn't. It appears that every time there was an offer to deal with the road safety legislation, or before that the flying truck wheels legislation, the government House leader saw it as a chance to use it as a lever. He thought, "Maybe this is a way of getting the opposition to agree to pass something they're opposed to. What we'll do is we'll say to the opposition," said Mr Johnson, the government House leader, "If you want to pass the road safety bill, we want you to agree that you have to pass this other bill that I know you're opposed to. I'll call that other bill to which you're opposed before I call the road safety bill, so if you want the road safety bill passed, you've got to pass this other legislation first."

The opposition House leaders, the member for St Catharines and myself, said to him: "No, no, that's not the way it works. You call the road safety bill first, and we'll pass it as we've committed to do. Then you can call whatever you like after that and we'll debate whatever you call."

Repeatedly, Mr Johnson, the government House leader, has used this stratagem, and the overall result of this approach is that the bill has now completed committee hearings and clause-by-clause, it is ready to come back for third reading, but it isn't law yet, and it isn't law because this government and the government House leader don't care about road safety. They see it simply as a way of trying to put pressure on the opposition parties



to pass other pieces of legislation which they think are more important. One of those, it appears, are these rule changes. I think it's appalling. I'm tempted to talk about some personal experiences I've had, but I won't. But I think road safety is the most important thing we could be dealing with today, on June 26, and this government doesn't think it's important enough.

I'd like to explain a couple of things. Because this government was asleep at the switch the other night, the opposition was able to move a strategy in this House which messed up the government's agenda for this week. We didn't do anything that was against the rules; as a matter of fact, we used the rules. This government still doesn't seem to be aware of the rules they're trying to change. It seems to me that any government that wants to change the rules should first understand what the rules are, but they didn't.

The other night we were debating amendments to the rule changes brought forward by the minister who is responsible for privatization in the government. In the evening, a Conservative member was speaking to those amendments, and when that member completed the remarks and sat down, no opposition member stood to participate in the debate. When that happened, of course, the Speaker asked for further debate and no one stood. I would emphasize that no Conservative stood either; nobody stood up. There was nobody to debate the amendments any further, and so the Speaker had to say: "Well, then, we're going to have a vote. All in favour? All those opposed?" We had a voice vote. The opposition members followed the rules and forced a division by five people standing.

Then, as the House leader for our party, I gave the Speaker a deferral motion, which is allowed under the rules, to defer the vote until the next day at five to 6. That meant there couldn't be any further debate on the motion and there couldn't be any debate the next day until after five to 6. It completely messed up the government's agenda.

I guess in opposition one revels in small victories. I felt pretty good about that little strategy. The Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation was the only minister of the crown who was in her place initially. She looked like a deer caught in the headlights. She didn't have the faintest idea what was going on or what she should do. The government House leader wasn't present; he apparently was at a speaking engagement. The minister responsible for senior citizens came into the House and the Speaker called for orders of the day because we couldn't deal with that matter any more; we had to deal with some other matter. The minister for senior citizens got up and called order 28. The Speaker then looked at the orders and said, "There is no order 28."

1750

The government looked like fools. They didn't know what on earth was going on. Despite the fact that they have this big majority, 82 members, they can't control the House. They don't understand how to run the place. So what do they want? They want to change the rules to make it easier for them to do that instead of just understanding the current rules and making certain that they're able to run the place based on the current rules.

Eventually we got to another order of the day and we debated Bill 129. Frankly, I don't understand why the government didn't just adjourn the House, because they didn't know what they were doing. Anyway, as a result, the government's agenda was messed up.

The government House leader understood, as the Speaker understood, that as a result of that strategy the rule changes could not be dealt with this week. They could not be made law this week. The vote could not be held. I won't go into the reasons for that, but everyone understood that. That meant that the government had a couple of choices: The government could come back next week, call the House back for another few days after Canada Day — or I suppose the day before Canada Day and then the days subsequent next week — and then they could pass the rule changes if they were determined to do that; or they would have to leave the rule changes until August when the government was going to come back.

However, the government didn't have a calendar motion passed yet. So the government House leader came to the two opposition House leaders and said: "Look, we want the calendar motion. We want to pass the calendar motion, and if you're prepared to allow us to debate the rule changes some more this week, the motion we will put will be the one that brings us back on August 18 for the fall session," despite the fact that it's still summertime. We said, "We think there are other pieces of legislation that should be debated this week and passed." I've talked about the road safety bill. That's an obvious one. There were other bills that we were prepared to pass. One is a community safety bill. Community safety is on the order paper. It's an important issue. It's one that has general support on all sides of the House. That's another one that had to be debated, that we said we were prepared to debate. The government said they needed supply, and there were a number of other matters. We were prepared to move on those. There were a couple of bills we weren't prepared to agree to pass this week, but there was a long list that we were prepared to deal with.

The government House leader said, "No, no, we want to debate the rule changes." I know the government members probably got a different version of this in caucus, but I'm not being unfair about this. This is the way it happened. Anyway, we said, "We want to deal with these others." One was the Game and Fish Act amendments, the new bill there. We said: "We could deal with that one. You said you wanted it." The government House leader said, "No, no, we want to deal with the rule changes." I said: "You've got two days left. Why don't you agree to debate the rule changes for one day and these other pieces of legislation on the other day?" He said, "My backbenchers won't accept that." Mr Johnson, the member for Don Mills, said: "No, no, the backbenchers won't accept that. They're determined to get these rule changes through." I said, "You can't get them through until August. What difference does it make unless you're coming back next week?"

There's another matter in this whole situation. The Integrity Commissioner tabled his report yesterday with regard to the conduct of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I won't go into a long debate about that because it has been raised a number of times in this House. We know this is the third time the minister has



messed up. We know he didn't do the honourable thing and tender his resignation so that the Premier could avoid a difficult situation. Instead, he said he wanted to stay on, he didn't think there was any problem, and he cherry-picked from the commissioner's report, much as the government has cherry-picked rule changes, to try and justify that.

The Premier said that the minister and two other members of the executive council had in fact violated the rules of conduct for ministers as the commissioner had ruled but that they all were doing things in good faith and they should all stay.

Then we needed some clarification on this. What we discovered was that according to the Members' Integrity Act it is important, it is required that the assembly respond within 30 days to such a report, that the assembly "consider and respond." So we had the rather pathetic view of a member of the government party getting up and trying to argue that a day is not a day, that 30 days could be interpreted as sessional days, so who knows how long this really is?

I thought, in trying to explain to Ted Nolan and to my wife about why I was away so much, I could say, "Well, it's not really a week, it's just a sessional day." You've got to put this in perspective, talk about sessional days rather than calendar days.

It was a pathetic argument and of course was rejected almost immediately by the Speaker. He simply called the Integrity Commissioner and the Integrity Commissioner said, "A day is a day is a day." It is not a sessional day. When the law says, "You must respond within 30 days," it means a month; not a sessional month, whatever that might be, but a month.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I don't believe we have a quorum to listen to the member for Algoma's remarks.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would you please verify if we have a quorum?

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk at the Table:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I think it's very important to note for the record that there have been no Liberal members in the House for the last hour.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order. Member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** The member who just raised that point of order which was not a point of order purports to be some sort of expert on rules. He would know then, if he is such an expert, that it is against the rules of the House to comment on the presence or absence of a member or any group of members.

**Mr Flaherty:** What do you care about rules? You are supposed to be debating the rules.

1800

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Member for Algoma?

**Mr Wildman:** We had an intervention from a member who knows absolutely nothing about anything. If the

member had been listening to the debate, he would know that I have indeed been talking about the —

**Mr Baird:** You're talking about the road safety bill.

**Mr Wildman:** Yes. It's not important to you guys.

**Mr Baird:** You're supposed to be talking about the rules.

**Mr Wildman:** The member would know, if he had listened, and he hasn't been, that I've been talking about why we are dealing with a time allocation motion on the last day of the session, which is what we are doing. That's what we're debating, a time allocation motion, and I've been dealing with this time allocation motion and why we are debating it. I know the member resents being pulled in from whatever he was doing so he had to listen to the debate, but it might be nice, if he doesn't wish to listen to the debate, if he would go back to whatever he was doing.

I was indicating why we had this time allocation motion here before us the last day of the session. I indicated that the government had messed up. It had lost control of the agenda of the assembly. It knew the government could not pass the rule changes this week. We all knew that. The government House leader admitted it. He had a choice. We could come back next week to deal with the rule changes or we could leave them until August. Everybody knows that. So the government House leader came to the two opposition House leaders and said, "Look, we need a House calendar motion." A House calendar motion will determine when we come back to deal with a number of matters, including the rule changes. I said, "If we're going to have the House calendar motion pass, we have to know what we're going to deal with on the last two days of the session." I see the government House leader is nodding his head, because he knows that's what happened.

The government House leader said he wanted to deal with the rule changes, and I said to him, "Why do you want to deal with the rule changes on the last two days of the session when you have all these other bills you haven't passed, when you know you can't get the rule changes passed until August — or next week, if you come back next week?" I have yet to get a good explanation for that.

**Hon David Johnson:** Come on outside and talk to me.

**Mr Wildman:** I don't know how the member means that when he says, "Come on outside." When I was a teenager and somebody invited you to come outside —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Wildman:** No. I've been wearing glasses since I was 12. I don't go outside.

**Hon David Johnson:** Purely gentlemanly fashion.

**Mr Wildman:** I remember once in this House a number of years ago when somebody accused the then Minister of Education, the Honourable Bette Stephenson, of something she objected to. I would remind you a male member did this. She invited him to come outside, and I don't think she intended to have a nice, civil discussion when they went outside. I remember Bette Stephenson very well, and I'll tell you, I never would have gone outside with her on that kind of an invitation either.

At any rate, I still don't understand, and the minister says he'd offer me an explanation.



Anyway, to get back to why we're dealing with this, I said, "If you want to debate the rule changes, why don't you debate them one day out of the two and we can deal with other legislation the other day?" The other day we could deal with the Game and Fish Act changes or the road safety bill or a number of bills the government said they wanted and that we were prepared to deal with. For some reason, the minister maintained that no, he had to have debate on the rule changes for two days, and he sort of indicated that it was his caucus that insisted on having the debate on the rule changes for two days, even though his caucus should be aware that the government can't pass the rule changes until August. So we could come back in August and have the debate for two days then and get these other pieces of legislation through this week.

We, in good faith, finally agreed to the calendar motion, and the calendar motion, which normally is debated for a couple of hours, went through in a matter of minutes the other night. But what do we find now? Instead of debating the rule changes for two days, as the government House leader indicated he wanted to do, we debated them for one day, and today we're debating this time allocation motion.

What does this time allocation motion mean? It means that the government can call this matter the first day we come back into session in August and pass it in five minutes. At the same time, the government House leader has said he is prepared to have real negotiations around the rule changes and the concerns of the opposition and the concerns of the government about rule changes between now and August, but look at the time allocation motion. It says, "the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion and any amendments thereto" — that is, the amendments that have already been put; I moved some amendments yesterday and the minister for privatization has moved some amendments — "which questions shall be decided without further amendment or debate." That means the motion that we have before us today and the amendments that are on the floor today will be put without further amendment or debate. How can that mean we will have real discussions in July about rule changes, if the government doesn't intend to have any further amendments or debate?

What we are being told here is this government, despite the fact that the House leader says he's prepared to debate and discuss and negotiate about rule changes over July, intends to pass the motion as it stands now in five minutes in August. That doesn't mean we're going to have real negotiation. It should be obvious to all members, no matter what your opinions about the rule changes, why the members of the opposition are frustrated about this. Frankly, it doesn't look very much like good faith to me.

We agreed to the calendar motion, we agreed to allow two days of debate on rule changes, despite the fact that we should be debating other things in these two days, other matters that are before the House already, like road safety, so that it can be in place before we break and is in place this July to give the enforcement officials greater power to deal with these things. We should be debating that. But we agreed we'll debate rule changes. If that's a

higher priority than road safety for this government, we'll debate it, but instead of debating the rule changes themselves and the amendments that are before the House for two days, we're debating a time allocation motion, which in any other parlance is a closure motion. The government will be able to get this through in five minutes when they come back in August.

The government House leader, in introducing this debate today, referred to our caucus as self-righteous. Give me a break. What are we supposed to be negotiating if we're going to pass the thing with no further amendment or debate? I offered. My staff person phoned the government House leader's office and said, "When are we going to be meeting in July?" Obviously on a personal basis, for family reasons, all of us, the government House leader and the opposition House leaders, want to know when we're going to meeting in July to negotiate so that we can arrange for whatever vacation we want to have with our families and so on. Then in response to that we're presented today with a time allocation motion that says, "Whether you like it or not, opposition, this time allocation motion means that it's going through in five minutes when we come back."

1810

Yesterday I moved an amendment to the rule changes. I have here the government's original motion. The government's original motion is a little over 16 pages long. I haven't counted up all the amendments so I can't give you the total number, but essentially what the government is doing is rewriting the standing orders book: 17 pages of changes.

We have before us as well the amendments that were moved by the minister for privatization, which have been accepted. Those are mostly minor amendments. They improve things somewhat, but they're minor amendments. These amendments give us 15 more minutes of debate. Instead of voting at 5:45, we vote at 6, so we get 15 minutes. But at the same time they cut the length of time it takes for a vote from 15 minutes to five, so same difference. They do make some changes with regard to the limits on the rights of the members to have questions on the order paper and they make some changes about time within which the government is obligated to respond to those, but they don't deal with the crucial questions, questions that are crucial, I'll admit, for the government members as well as the opposition members.

I know that many members of the party that supports the government resent the fact that they're expected to sit here and listen to me and not have the same opportunity to participate in the debate. I know they feel that way. I felt that way when I was in their shoes in the past. I haven't been exactly in the same position they have because I never had the opportunity to serve as a member of the government back bench, but I've been a backbencher, I'm a backbencher now. I understand the concerns that backbenchers have. They want to represent their constituents; they want the opportunity to participate in debate.

The crux of the argument is that the government says, "We want to get our agenda through quickly. We want to have a maximum of three days on second reading of bills." If the government arbitrarily sets that limit of num-



ber of days, then that inevitably means the government backbenchers don't get to speak under the current rules.

Every time I raise this as an option for the government, many of those government backbenchers who resent the fact that they don't get to speak pooh-pooh what I'm saying as if I'm being silly, but there's a very simple way of giving government backbenchers more time to speak on bills that are important. You simply don't say you have to get them through in three days. You don't have to limit second reading debate to three days. You can have four or five days of second reading debate. But the government backbenchers say, "You're crazy, we couldn't have that long for debate." Why not, on important issues?

I tried to make the point yesterday, and I'm not sure whether I was effective in making it, that in moving the amendment that we have before the House, we only dealt with two of the sections of the government changes. They are very important sections, I'll admit, but they only deal with two sections. They don't deal with all of these picayune changes that you've decided to make to the rules. If you want them through, fine, go ahead.

I am quite supportive of the idea that the independent member, for instance, should have more rights in this House. It's quite unacceptable that he should not have the same rights as all other members. It's just a quirk of the rules and if we want to amend the rules to give him those rights, then I agree with it, and the government House leader knows that both myself and the member for St Catharines agree with that. It's just not fair. It's not fair to that member and it's not fair to his constituents. His constituents chose him as their representative and he should then have the same opportunity to put forward views and concerns of his constituents as all other members, so we support that.

There are a lot of other changes in here that are okay, that we could go along with. I suppose if we had wanted to be silly, we could have gone through these 16 or 17 pages of amendments and we could have put in amendments to everything if we were trying to stall debate here, but that wasn't the purpose of our amendment. Our amendment was to identify the central issues that have got to be dealt with. In our view, the central issues deal with the two-for-one day and the length of debating time for members.

There are some other problems. We don't like the change in the order of the House so that question period starts later. We don't like that. We think there should be some reconsideration of that. We don't like the fact that question period automatically is to end at 4 o'clock, no matter how long it's gone on. But that's not the central issue. The central issue deals with extension of debate into the evening and counting it as two days and the length of time for debating for each member in the House.

When I introduced this amendment the other day it was met with derision from some government members. They were saying, "You just want the status quo." If we wanted the status quo, we would simply say we're opposed to all of these amendments. That would be the status quo. We didn't say that. We said there are two areas we reject, we don't accept. We do not believe that

individual members' rights are enhanced by taking away the time that they can debate. I think that's elementary. We do not believe it enhances the rights of the members to allow the government to get a bill through in three days.

One of the amendments that was brought in by the minister responsible for privatization now says, "We won't pass bills in three days; we will now be able to pass two bills in six days." That's better. Instead of being able to get a bill through in six days, as you can under the current rules, if you wish, you will now be able to get two bills in six days. You're speeding up the agenda. That's not about enhancing the rights of members; it's about helping the government speed up the agenda. Those are the central issues that must be dealt with.

I was under the impression from my discussion with the government House leader and the member for St Catharines that we were going to have serious negotiations in July about these issues, and that's why we highlighted them by putting them forward as an amendment. In the debate about those amendments I indicated, just as I hoped the government's final position was not as it is in their amendments, that this was not necessarily our final position.

1820

At this point in time, we are saying we want the same number of minutes for debate as we have now. We are also saying we do not accept the extension into the evening and counting it as two sessional days. We're opposed to that. But the final position we might arrive at through negotiation is somewhere between what the government is proposing and what we are saying we want. That's what negotiation is about.

As the member for Parry Sound said in 1992, if the government wants these rules to help the assembly work better, the final rules must be arrived at through negotiation and some sort of agreement, or at least less opposition. If you continue to say, "We're going to pass these in five minutes when we come back in August," do you know what the result is going to be? I said this the other night; I'm being very frank. The result is that you'll get controversial bills through more quickly, you will, but every other, non-controversial bill is going to take you longer. That will be the result.

I can indicate that with some evidence of what's happened around here that the government is unhappy about. Let's look at what's on the order paper right now. We've got some controversial matters related to downloading, government restructuring and so on that the government wants to get through. I know they're going to be bringing in more bills in August. We have changes to the Labour Relations Act, we have changes to the Workers' Compensation Act, we have changes to rent control. These are all very controversial. Even the government members who support these changes admit they are controversial. They are going to generate a lot of debate and opposition. There's no question about that.

The government in the end, because they have a majority, will get them through, either as they're proposing them now or, if they listen to the presentations made to them by members of the public, perhaps with amendment. But they will get them through; that's the way it works. There isn't one piece of legislation that the



members of the government party can point to that the opposition has prevented the government from passing. There isn't one. It's simple. It's numbers. It's arithmetic. You've got 82 members. You'll get them through. What is the rush?

I hope we're going to have real negotiations. Those negotiations might fail. We mightn't be successful in coming to any kind of accommodation; I admit that. But we might. In the end, we might not agree with what the government finally puts forward, but we might be less opposed to it — let's put it that way.

This is really important. The member for St Catharines said that this is perhaps the most important initiative of the government this session. It is really important. Sure, it's important to us in the opposition right now, but it's not just important for all of us who are in the House right now in 1997. These rules will not just affect us and the current government's agenda. They will affect the way this assembly works for a long time to come.

I said the other day that if these rules pass, particularly if they're done in a unilateral fashion, as is in the time allocation motion, they will pass without further amendment or debate, in five minutes. If that happens, the opposition is going to be forced to do its job in other ways.

You've got to understand in this House that the government is certainly elected with a mandate to govern and to get its agenda through. But the opposition members are elected with a mandate to oppose, to criticize, to scrutinize and to debate. Just as the government has a mandate, so too does the opposition, and they are in conflict. The strength of our system is that we try to resolve that conflict in a civilized way. As the member for Renfrew North said the other night, this place — debate, argument — is a substitute for guns and the battlefield, because that's how political argument is carried on in most other parts of the world.

Sure, there are lots of problems in the way we do things around here. The clerks will know that sometimes, from time to time, I get somewhat frustrated. Sometimes I've even been known to take out my frustrations on the members of the Clerk's table. I know the Clerk would never betray that to anyone. But at the same time, this is the best place anyone could be who is interested in serving the public. I've been in this place for many years, serving the people of Algoma and the people of Ontario. It is a wonderful place to be. It's a tremendous opportunity, despite all of the frustrations that all of us experience in this House. It's wonderful opportunity to serve your neighbours and friends, the communities and the people of Ontario.

So when we make rule changes, we've got to understand that we affect certainly the atmosphere in this place, but we also affect the way the members who are elected to represent the people of Ontario are going to be able to carry out their jobs; not just the people on the government side, but also the people on the opposition side.

What I find frustrating is — and I may be wrong, I sincerely hope I'm wrong on this — that many of the government members seem not to understand that the opposition is also elected to do a job. I know the member

for Parry Sound understands that. I know the member for Carleton, Norm Sterling, understands that. I know the member for Leeds-Grenville understands it. As the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore knows, the member for Leeds-Grenville and I have not agreed on many things over the years. But we agree on a couple of things that I think he believes about the way this place should operate. He also has the advantage, just as I have had and the member for Algoma-Manitoulin has had, of having served on both sides of this House.

What we do between now and August about these rule changes will have ramifications, not just for this government's agenda, the Harris government's agenda, between now and the next election, but for how this place operates as a democratic debating forum for many years to come. It's obvious that whoever is the government after the next election, or subsequent elections, will be tempted to leave the rules as they are because it'll make it very difficult for the opposition to do its job.

I'll admit that if I'm in government after the next election, I might be tempted to say, "These ain't bad rules." It seems to me the only way these rules will ever change in the future — that is, to give the opposition greater ability to carry out its mandate — will be if we have a minority government.

#### 1830

But as the member for Parry Sound has said, it's not so important what the actual rules are; what's more important is the atmosphere in this place, how we work together even though we are opposing one another. If there isn't cooperation and understanding of each other's position and a willingness to have some give and take, you can tighten the rules so tight that the opposition can never participate and the opposition will still mess it up.

Some members of the government party have reacted against what I've said a couple of times during this debate where I've said that sometimes the opposition will have to be even more bizarre in its opposition. We'll have to find even stranger ways of opposing if the rules are too tight.

**Mr Michael Brown:** And we'll find them.

**Mr Wildman:** But that's the fact. It's not just if the Liberals and the New Democrats are in opposition, it will also be true if the Conservatives are in opposition. What led to some of the rules changes in 1992? Frankly, it was the antics of the Conservatives. "Antics" was the term we used at that time and that the government is now using about us. It's been mentioned over and over about reading the lakes and rivers into the record. That was one example. The reason it's used most often of course is that it was done by the then leader of the third party, the now Premier.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Acting Speaker:** Could you check and see if there's a quorum.

**Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Algoma.



**Mr Wildman:** The point I'm trying to make is that it would have been far more productive for all of us, members of the government and for opposition, to use the last two days of the House sitting in June to deal with issues that are important, that we could have gotten through.

I've said that we could have been dealing with the road safety act. I honestly also think that we should have been dealing with the report of the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner has made a ruling that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was in contravention of the law. The law says that this assembly has the responsibility to consider and respond by July 25.

Today in the assembly the government House leader proposed a motion. That motion would have had the matter referred to the Legislative Assembly committee and the committee would have been authorized to sit for two days between now and July 25, and then in a bizarre fashion the motion said that the committee would report to the Integrity Commissioner.

The Integrity Commissioner does not receive reports from this assembly, in my understanding. That's not his job. That's not his role. His role is to give advice to members and to make rulings on questions referred to him. He doesn't receive rulings or reports from this assembly. Committees of this assembly, for those of you who are interested in the rules and understand the rules, report to the assembly. They consider matters referred to the committees by the assembly and they report back to the assembly. They don't report to a commissioner.

That motion was unacceptable to us. I said, "If you want to leave that in the motion, go ahead." This is in the discussions we had prior to the government House leader introducing the motion. I said, "Go ahead. You can do that, if you want, but you also have to add to that motion that the committee will report back to the House when the House reconvenes." The government House leader said, "Oh, no, we don't want to do that." I know why he didn't want to do that. As we all know, those of us who are interested in the rules, when a committee reports to the House, that is debatable.

The government House leader did not want to have a debate in August about the conduct of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In other words, he doesn't like the rules. He doesn't like the way things work. He doesn't like the way things operate in this place when a matter is referred to the Legislative Assembly committee. The Legislative Assembly committee considers it and reports back to the House, and if the assembly then decides to debate that report, that is as in the rules. The government House leader understood that. He doesn't want a debate and so he said no, he wouldn't do that. When he brought forward the motion, he asked for unanimous consent and the members of the Liberal Party said no.

I know what this is going to mean. It's going to mean one of two things. It's going to mean that the government House leader will ask the Speaker to call the House back for one day some time in July, between now and July 25, to debate the issue, although I don't think that's very likely.

What is more likely to happen is that we will come back according to the House calendar motion on August 18 and the assembly will be in contravention of the law. If the assembly is in contravention of the law, that's a serious problem because obviously all of us, as honourable members elected to represent the people of Ontario, have a responsibility to uphold the law. If we come back not having considered that matter before July 25, the assembly will be in contravention of the law.

How are we going to deal with that? I suspect that if anybody raises that at that time, the government House leader will get up and say, "We tried to comply with the law by moving a motion back on June 26, but we didn't get unanimous consent," ignoring the fact that the motion he put was inadequate to comply with the law.

Even if the government House leader and the Conservative government have got the rule changes pat by the time that matter is raised in the House, even if the government has moved forward on this time allocation motion and passed the rule changes in five minutes as is set out in this time allocation motion, mark my words, the government will not get away with being in contravention of the law and we in the opposition will raise the issue and say that the assembly has not carried out its responsibilities according to the Members' Integrity Act.

In doing that, the government will simply be compounding the miserable record it has in dealing with the issue of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's behaviour. It's bad enough that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing doesn't understand his responsibilities as a minister of the crown, that he has been in trouble three times, that he has been found to be acting inappropriately by the Speaker and by the Integrity Commissioner. That's bad enough, but the government is compounding the situation if it doesn't have the House consider and respond to this matter before July 25. All of this is interesting, but it doesn't deal with the central issue. The central issue is that the Premier of this province doesn't understand his obligations with regard to the conduct of the members of the executive council.

1840

It is the Premier where the buck stops. It is the Premier who decides who is in cabinet and who is not. It is the Premier who decides whether or not an individual who has been given a cabinet post is conducting herself or himself in a way that means that individual can continue in that cabinet post. It's not the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner can suggest that a member of this assembly who has contravened the law should no longer be a member of this assembly, but the commissioner cannot make that kind of a ruling with regard to membership in the executive council. Only the Premier can do that.

Frankly, it really was incumbent upon Mr Leach, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to do the honourable thing and himself resign to avoid the embarrassment for the Premier. He should have perhaps followed the example of the Minister of Health, who at least had the gumption to go to the Premier and say: "Look, there is an allegation about a member of my staff. There is an appearance that I may have been involved or somebody in my office was involved, and until this matter is dealt with I'm going to resign." I disagree with



a lot of things the Minister of Health is doing to health in this province, but at least he had the integrity to say to the Premier, "In that kind of a situation I should not continue as a member of the executive council."

Apparently, Mr Leach does not have that level of integrity. Apparently, Mr Leach doesn't understand the issue. He doesn't understand the importance of what has happened. He doesn't understand the difficulty he has put the government in. There certainly were a lot of people on that side in question period yesterday and today who did; I could tell from the glum looks on their faces.

**Mr Flaherty:** It's your speech.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm talking about question period. It was during question period that Mr Leach and the Premier were attempting to defend the indefensible. There were an awful lot of glum faces around and there was almost no applause. The members across the way sat on their hands because they were embarrassed.

The buck finally stops on the Premier's desk. The Premier should have asked for Mr Leach's resignation if it wasn't voluntarily tendered. By not doing that, the Premier has lowered the standards by which he judges the acceptability of members of the executive council in the way they conduct themselves. That demeans all of us; it demeans the government, it demeans the assembly because the Premier is not providing an example of the kind of behaviour that must be followed by a cabinet minister in what he's doing.

We should be debating that issue today. If the government took the Integrity Commissioner's report seriously, understood the impact of it, this assembly should be considering that today, because it's the last day of the session before July 25; or we should be coming back next week to deal with it; or we should be debating a motion on the referral of that matter to a committee of the assembly, such as the Legislative Assembly committee, so that committee could act before July 25. That's what we should be doing today.

If the government didn't want to deal with all of the bills that are on the order paper that they know we would agree to, at least we should be dealing with that matter, the matter of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's inappropriate behaviour as a minister of the crown. What are we debating? We're debating this time allocation motion on rule changes, a time allocation motion which will make it possible for this government to ram these changes through in five minutes when we come back in August.

In closing, I suppose I should re-emphasize a couple of things. In agreeing to the calendar motion, we took the government House leader at his word. We took him seriously when he said he was interested in real negotiations in August about rule changes. We took him seriously when he said he expected that the amended motion that is before us now would not be the final rule changes we would deal with in August. We took that seriously and as a result we agreed in a matter of minutes to the motion on the House calendar. But now we have a time allocation motion before us which says that the matter will be put when it's called, it will be decided without further amendment or debate. What does it mean? How can you have serious negotiation about changes to

the rules in July if in August you can't debate them and you can't amend them, you just vote?

This government is not dealing with the opposition and with the people of this province in a straightforward manner. This government is trying to hoodwink people into saying that they will agree to negotiate things when they have no intention, apparently, of doing that.

The government House leader keeps arguing that he has a very long agenda to go through and he can't get it through. That's why he needs these rule changes. Let's look at what's on the order paper right now. I listed a number of important issues that the government wants to deal with which we all admit will be controversial, whether we agree with the government's position or not. The changes to the Labour Relations Act, the changes to the Workers' Compensation Act and changes to the Rent Control Act are among the most controversial.

Under these new rule changes, the government will be able to get those through quickly. The government will be able to get those changes through very quickly. We will oppose them, we will do everything we can to oppose them, but in the end if the government is determined to pass those bills without amendment, the government will do it because the government has the majority.

But look at what else is on the order paper. You've got a bunch of other little bills, unimportant bills, ones that are not controversial. A group of them are the so-called red tape bills. They've been on the order paper for a couple of years. Why is it we haven't been able to get those through? I'll tell you why.

**Mr Flaherty:** Because of you.

**Mr Wildman:** Exactly, and the rules are not going to change that. This guy who is interjecting doesn't understand this. I'm telling you the government will be able to get its controversial bills through more quickly. You will get the workers' compensation bill through more quickly, you will get the rent control bill through more quickly, you will get the labour relations bill through more quickly, you will get the teacher collective bargaining bill through more quickly, but you won't get all the stuff you want to do as well through more quickly. It's going to take you longer.

All those other bills, the red tape bills, do you know how you could get them through quickly? You could bundle them. That's what the debate has been about. "Let's put them all together and deal with them as a group."

*Interjection.*

1850

**Mr Wildman:** We haven't let you do it now and if you move forward on these rules, we sure as hell will not let you do it in the fall. You'll deal with each one of those bills individually. You want them? Sure. We'll deal with them the maximum amount of time and you may have to — I don't know — time-allocate them individually.

The member a moment ago interjected and said, "We'll get them through." Yes, perhaps you'll get them through but it's going to take you an awfully long time. Yes, you'll get the workers' compensation stuff through and you'll hurt injured workers. Yes, you'll get the rent control stuff through and it'll take away protection for



tenants. Yes, you'll get the changes to the Labour Relations Act through that will deny rights to workers. Yes, you'll get the changes to teacher collective bargaining through which may deny teachers their rights under the current Bill 100. You'll get those through. It'll take you some time but you'll get them through all right, and you'll get them through faster than you can under the current rules. But those stupid little red tape bills are going to take you an awful long time because you're going to have to deal with each one of them individually and we'll debate every one of them to the maximum and there won't be a darn thing under these new rules you can do about it.

If you don't want that to happen, what you need to do is have real negotiations about these rule changes in July. You need to ask, "What are the problems that the opposition has with these particular rule changes? What are the rule changes the government wants, and is there some accommodation, is there some way we can come up with something that's better for the opposition and for the government so that in the fall we might have some spirit of cooperation in this assembly, that we might be prepared to bundle" — to use that term — "some of the red tape bills and deal with them as a group?"

It's up to you, it's up to the government. That's the decision the government must make. Is the government going to ram these things through as per this time allocation motion that is before the House, that shouldn't be before the House? Is it, or is the government going to sit down with the opposition over the next few weeks and say, "Okay, how do we deal with this so that we can work in a civilized fashion in this House?"

The decision in the last analysis is the Premier's. In this government, more than any other government I have seen in the 22 years I've served in the House, everything is determined by the Premier. This is the most centralized — I won't use the other word — administration I have ever seen. The buck stops on the Premier's desk, as I said earlier, but in this government it starts on the Premier's desk too. Everything is decided by those minions who work in the catacombs in the Premier's office and other ministers get instructions. I'm not party to the cabinet meetings, obviously, I'm not party to the caucus meetings on the other side, and I shouldn't be, but I know there isn't the same kind of give and take within the government caucus in this government that there was in the previous government under the premiership of Bob Rae or the government before that, I think, under the premiership of David Peterson, or the previous administration of Bill Davis.

A good friend of mine and of many of us in this House passed away a few days ago, much too young. His name was Larry Grossman. I couldn't go to the funeral, neither could the member for St Catharines, because of the shenanigans of the situation around here. But let me tell you something about that member when he was first elected. He was elected in 1975, the same time I was. At that time — this may sound familiar to some of you — the government was trying to close the Doctors Hospital. They're trying to close it again now. That newly elected member for St Andrew-St Patrick, a government backbencher, was on his feet every day asking embarrassing questions of the government, he was out organizing in the

community against the closure of Doctors Hospital and he stopped the government.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** He took them to court.

**Mr Wildman:** He took them to court, yes. You know how Bill Davis reacted to that? He put him in the cabinet. "This guy's got ability. He knows what he's doing."

**Mr Baird:** There were other reasons.

**Mr Wildman:** There were other reasons but it was largely his ability. He had demonstrated his ability.

**Mr Baird:** It was to shut him up.

**Mr Wildman:** It was also to shut him up, that's true; that's quite true. But what does this government do to members who challenge their own party? They don't put them in the cabinet; they put them in purgatory.

**Ms Lankin:** They protect Leach and fire Carr. That makes no sense.

**Mr Wildman:** The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is still in the cabinet after all his transgressions and Gary Carr isn't in this House most of the time. The member for Wentworth North has to mobilize the opposition and a few of his friends in the government backbench to support his positions against the cabinet because the cabinet dumps him and won't have anything to do with him because he has the gall to cross the Premier and to challenge the Premier. If this government treats its own members that way, maybe it's completely too much to hope for that they will actually negotiate with the opposition about rule changes that will work for all the members of the House.

I heard some of the debate this morning in private members' hour when the member for Wentworth North I think used rather intemperate language about the government. I wouldn't use that same kind of language about the government and I am not a member of the same party. But I'll tell you, the government House leader had better be serious about real negotiations in July about these rule changes and he'd better not be serious about this motion that he is determined we should spend today, the last day of the session in June, debating. If he forces these changes through in five minutes, as he is allowed to do under this motion if it passes, there will be acrimony in this House. You ain't seen nothing yet, and I don't relish saying that. The member for Wellington and I have known each other for a long time and he knows of what I speak.

It is ridiculous that we are debating this today instead of road safety or the other matters I've raised. It is ridiculous that we are going into the summer holiday without proper protection for road safety and the touring public. Instead, we are debating a time allocation motion on rule changes that this government appears determined to send through. It's unfortunate and it is ridiculous.

**Mr Baird:** I'm pleased to rise and to join the debate on the motion presented by my colleague the member for Don Mills.

Let me at the outset thank the member for Algoma for his remarks. He said at the outset of his comments that he hoped some of his comments would give us all pause to consider, and indeed, I think there is a good amount of what he says that is very true. In the previous speeches he made, not only on the two amendments but on the main motion, I certainly took the time to listen, and not



just to listen but to try to genuinely understand where he was coming from and what his concerns were. I think a good number of the amendments presented on Tuesday by my colleague the member for Mississauga West are reflective of some of what we heard, but certainly not every concern.

**1900**

Let me say at the outset as well that the government is committed to improving both the effectiveness and the efficiency of Ontario's Parliament. In his annual report released just this week our Integrity Commissioner, Judge Evans, stated that the House was not working as well as it could, that teachers are so dismayed at the rudeness and antics of Ontario's MPPs that they do not use it to teach democratic principles to their students. Probably all of us to some extent, certainly on both sides of the House, have to assume some sort of collective responsibility for that judgment made by Judge Evans and to do our utmost at an individual level to try and clean it up.

There are probably two sides to that coin: the heckling and interjections which occur in this place. In a democratic institution, from time to time, people feel the need to express themselves. That's one part we should try to deal with, as well some of the antics and the silly season used by all parties at various times in recent years, to try to clean up our act. I think the public expects nothing less.

Our goal is to restore some order to the House, to limit as much as possible the tomfoolery and filibustering that has marked this session and embarrassed this House. I believe the changes presented in this motion will do just that.

There have been claims that this government is denying the public any opportunity for input. We sent staff over to the legislative library, including the very hard-working Donna Duncan from our government House leader's office, and they spent many hours logging through the library and trying to research a response to just how many hours and minutes of committee time was spent, by all three governments of all three political parties in recent years, debating bills and during the public deputations.

Donna Duncan was one of the staff who discovered — it's a very interesting and surprising result which I'd like to report on to the House with respect to the consideration of this motion. In 1996 this government sent bills out for 293 hours and five minutes of debate with travelling committees, those committees which depart Queen's Park to travel across the province to receive input in locales around the province. From time to time, these committees adjourn from Queen's Park and visit northern Ontario, southwestern Ontario, central Ontario and have the opportunity on occasion to come to my part of the province in eastern Ontario. This government in 1996 spent 427 hours and six minutes in committees right here at Queen's Park for a total of 720 hours and 11 minutes. That was considerable, I know, for a good number of my colleagues on all sides of the House whom I travelled with. We certainly worked hard in 1996.

I looked at the record for 1994, the last year the New Democratic Party was in government. It sent bills out for 209 hours and 35 minutes of debates for travelling

committees and 472 hours and six minutes in committees here at Queen's Park for a total of 681 hours and 41 minutes. In other words, this government has spent almost 40 hours longer in committee receiving public input on bills than did the previous government in 1994.

Our record compared with the Liberals, I believe, is even better. In 1989 the Liberals sent their bills out for only 74 hours of travelling committees and 455 hours spent here at Queen's Park, for a total of only 529 hours of opportunity for public input.

Like my colleague the member for Algoma said, "Look at the actions, not at the rhetoric," and I am pleased to note those numbers again. In 1996, under the Conservative government, 720 hours consulting with the public and hearing their concerns; under the previous NDP government, 681; and finally, under the Liberals, 529. So that's quite important: There are more hours of public hearings for bills.

I'd now like to talk about the nature of the bill, what type of government legislation. In 1996 this government passed 33 bills; in 1994, the previous NDP government passed 41 bills, 25% more bills with less opportunity for public input.

Before you get the idea that the third party was hard at work improving the quality of life for Ontarians by passing such a high number of bills, I should point out that many of the bills passed were associated with tax increases. I look at some of the bills that were passed by the previous government: Bill 146, the Corporations Tax Amendment Act; Bill 110, the Employer Health Tax Amendment Act; and Bill 138, the Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act.

I look at the consequences of those bills. My colleague the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, Gerry Phillips, once commented after the presentation of a New Democratic Party budget that the billion dollars of new tax increases presented in that budget would directly kill, in his judgement, 25,000 jobs. Regrettably, we have to look at the stats. Was the member for Scarborough-Agincourt right in the early 1990s when he said that the billion dollars of tax increases would kill at least 25,000 existing jobs? Regrettably, I'm saddened to report that he was right, that those jobs were lost.

I look at these three tax bills which raised taxes and put a pinch on hard-working families struggling to make ends meet, some families in my constituency who simply were taxed and taxed and taxed to death. Over the last 10 years, there were 65 tax increases from the provincial government alone.

That was some of the enormity of the bills being passed by the previous government which were obviously quite substantial and had an enormous effect on the quality of lives of hard-working families across Ontario. I think that's something that's very important.

To look at our colleagues in the now official opposition, the then Liberal government of the day in 1989: 93 bills received third reading by the Liberal government, almost three times the number passed by this government in 1996. So we're looking at 93 Liberal bills in 1989, 41 NDP bills in 1994 and 33 government bills passed in 1996 by the Conservative government. The Conservative Party led by Premier Harris saw more hours of public hearings.



**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** Bravo.

**Mr Baird:** My colleague the member for Fort York says bravo and I would thank him for that great compliment. Mon collègue M. Marchese était correct.

This government has had a substantial amount of public hearings and, I can tell all of my colleagues, at substantial cost to each and every member of this Legislature who has taken time away from Queen's Park and from their responsibilities working with their constituents to travel the province to try to solicit other views and take them into consideration when bills are being considered. That's very important to note and it puts it in context in terms of how much public consultation there's been and how many bills have been passed.

A good number of my colleagues suggested this government was passing more pieces of legislation than any government in history, but when you look at the facts and at some of the substantive nature of those pieces of legislation, it does put it into context.

We have not had any tax bills taking a larger bite out of hardworking families in Ontario, killing jobs and leading to less prosperity, less hope, less opportunity, and that's very important to note.

With respect to the rule changes and the motion before us to have a vote, we have had a substantial amount of debate on those rule changes. I looked at the record. As a new member who doesn't have the experience some of my colleagues have, I looked at the amount of time that this place considered previous rule changes. I looked at the Liberal motion number 9, dated July 25, 1989. There were prolonged all-party negotiations and there was one hour and 35 minutes, so there was not a substantial amount of time debated in this place.

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I looked at the previous New Democratic Party rule changes brought in in 1992 as a gauge to see what would be a reasonable period of time to debate these motions, what would be a fair and reasonable time. The New Democratic Party obtained through two motions, motions number 7 and 11 in June 1992 — both those motions together, to be fair, saw 18 hours and 30 minutes of debate. We have had the occasion to debate in this place not only this past Monday; we have had the occasion on Tuesday of last week, sitting until midnight, and on Wednesday, so we've had four days of debate plus this date on time allocation and the motion presented by my colleague the member for Don Mills.

That says there has been substantially more debate on the motion that we're dealing with. I think that's important to note. In this government not only has there been more committee time on fewer bills; there has been more debate in terms of the changes to the standing orders.

One thing that's important to note as well is not only legislative time here in this place. I read with great interest an editorial in the *Toronto Star*, which quite frankly was not enamoured or thrilled with all of our rule changes, but they said to give this party credit that they floated the proposals before they tabled them in the Legislative Assembly. That's something to note, because the alternative would have been simply to slap down a rule change motion on the order paper rather than sending it out to all members to get their input and to get their thoughts before action was taken. That is important.

For those members who chose to participate in that process, regrettably there weren't as many from the opposition as we all would have liked, but a good number of my own caucus colleagues came forward with some concerns, and those concerns were directly reflected in the motion presented by my colleague the member for Don Mills.

I look at the member for Elgin, who came forward with a good number of suggestions on how the role of the independent member could be increased, how that member could have more opportunity. Quite frankly, I had never even spoken to the member for Elgin. He came forward with some very positive suggestions, some suggestions, I'd say to the member for Beaches-Woodbine, which had been sitting in a legislative report, a report of a committee with members from all parties, and had been gathering dust since 1993.

*Interjection.*

**M. Baird :** Mon collègue le député de Fort York a probablement participé à ce rapport. Malheureusement, ce rapport est resté à la bibliothèque du Parlement pendant quatre ans et ça n'a jamais été lu par une motion du greffier ici en la Chambre.

This report sat for four years gathering dust and the member for Elgin came forward and said: "Here are my recommendations. I'd like a voice. As an independent member, as one member, I'd like to be able to fully participate in this process." I said to him, "It's not only an insult to you personally," but, as the member for Algoma said, it's an insult to his constituents in Elgin.

I read the proposals, and the government adopted virtually every single one of them in the motion here today. That was something I thought was important. Should the member for Elgin be required to depend on the Speaker of the day to be able to ask questions, to participate in debate, to participate in private members' hour, even to have the simple right to sit on a legislative committee? Some Speakers have said: "No, you can't speak. You are an independent member; there is no place for you in this chamber." Some Speakers have said, "Oh, once in a while, but don't ask me too often," while the current Speaker has been more generous. But that member should not have to wait, to depend on the whims of the Speaker of the day; he should have a democratic right to participate in this place. It is important to note that all of those reforms were reflected in the motion presented that we seek to have voted on.

My colleague from Algoma also mentioned this place's role as a democratic debating forum. I suggest that my colleagues ponder and consider this thought, that those watching television consider this thought: Look back at Hansard and read the content of the 90-minute speeches and ask yourself, how often has a speaker, in 90 minutes, spoken to the issue at hand? Too often we have seen 20-minute tangents just in debate on these standing order motions, amendments, and on this time allocation. We have seen speakers being called to order time and again. Just last night, Speaker Boyd in the chair made several comments to speakers to stick to the topic at hand, and it's a challenge, because a 90-minute speaking time is an awfully long time.

My colleague the member for Cochrane South said in 1992 —



**Mr Marchese:** What did he say?

**Mr Baird:** My colleague from Fort York asks, "What did he say?" He said if you can't say it in 20 minutes, you've got a problem. This motion, of course, allows for 40 minutes of debate on the first go-round, 20 minutes of debate on the second, and then after five hours of debate, 10 minutes. There will be the opportunity for debate after each of those three speeches, where three or four members will have the opportunity to get up and respond to those speeches, and then for the member to have a second opportunity to speak for two minutes to respond to those comments: real debate.

What I hope is that we'll have more quality speeches that will contribute to the debate, quality speeches like that of the member for Hamilton West, who I thought gave a fantastic, well-prepared speech just this morning, even though I didn't agree with her on that subject, that I think contributed to the debate. I note that she only had six or seven minutes in which to do that, but she did an able job. I think that's important.

Where do those numbers come from: 40, 20 and 10? Directly from the House of Commons, directly from our federal Parliament. Why would we use the federal Parliament? The federal Parliament is our mother Parliament here in Canada. It's a Parliament to which academics and parliamentary scholars come from around the Commonwealth, and indeed the entire world, to look at how we operate as a Liberal democracy. Those numbers came directly from the way Jean Chrétien runs things in Ottawa, the democratic way he runs the government, and that's very important to note.

I feel it's very important to put those changes into context. Rather than the 90-minute speeches, would you not rather hear from the first speaker for 40 minutes and then allow five more members the opportunity to participate, five more members the opportunity to come to this place and to say, "Listen, here's what my constituents in High Park-Swansea have to say," "Here's what my constituents in Arthur or Staynor have to say," "Here's what my constituents in Scarborough East have to say"? That would contribute to the debate here, and in a very real way we could just begin to address the concerns that Judge Evans laid down, the challenge that Judge Evans laid down to this place, to deal with it.

I think it is very important to mention the time we have spent in this House dealing with antics. I listened to a speech the other night by my colleague the member for Riverdale, and I thought she gave a very good speech. What the member for Riverdale said was that she disliked the part of the main motion that would allow for evening sittings because she wouldn't have sufficient time to give notice of her attendance or lack thereof at a community meeting. I noticed with considerable interest those remarks and I was very moved by them. It did give me pause to reflect, but then I thought of the opportunities when I'm invited to participate at events in my constituency when I haven't had the opportunity because I have to be in this place, those times that I would like to be in my constituency to speak to a community meeting.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Baird:** I know the member for Fort York would like to speak, but he'll be up next.

The member for Riverdale said she wanted to be able to attend those meetings. The rest of us would like to be able to attend those meetings too, and I wanted to give a message to those from outside the greater Toronto area, those of us who travel a distance to get here. We don't have the opportunity to be at a lot of the community meetings when the House is in session, we don't have the opportunity to meet with constituents during the week, and that causes me great concern. In July while many are taking vacation, I will have to be out knocking on doors in my community, going out and meeting with community groups, with school councils and with others in the community, community associations, to receive their input, because I haven't had that opportunity, and that's a fair game. Those of us from outside the provincial capital have to deal with that reality and that's a fair point.

**1920**

But for me and many members who travel from outside of Toronto, to drive the five or five and a half hours to get to this place and then to not debate, to not debate legislation and to not debate the public's business but simply to engage in silly tactics does cause us concern. When we arrived back at our constituencies on Thursday evening, when we were asked: "What bills did you consider this week?" and we were able to say, "I'm afraid we didn't consider any; the whole week was spent, 24 hours a day, voting on 12,000 amendments," people were rightfully concerned.

I appreciate the concern the member for Fort York has said, so in a very real sense those of us from outside Metropolitan Toronto and the greater Toronto area are especially concerned.

**Mr Marchese:** John, you've gone beyond 20 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Fort York, come to order.

**Mr Baird:** Those evening sessions will allow us to have more debate, more democracy, more opportunity to debate those bills, so they can get out to committee. We've seen already that under this government there has been a considerable amount of committee time and I think the ability to work a few extra hours in the evening when so many of us have travelled so far to get here is not an unreasonable request. It's something I would ask all members, particularly those from the greater Toronto area and the city of Toronto, to consider, because it's very, very important.

If I look at the other changes proposed in this legislation to give individual members more opportunity to speak, it's very important, particularly if you look at the opportunities in this place for individual members in the committee system. Right now, there was one particular member who spoke in committee for some six months. Someone said, "How could a member speak for six months in a committee?" There was a standing committee of this Legislative Assembly which travelled across the province, which heard a lot of submissions within the city of Toronto on proposed law, on referendums. One member got the floor some time in December and spoke for almost six months. The rest of those members of the committee, as individual members, were deprived of the



opportunity to talk about what they had heard because one member spoke for six months.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Baird:** I know the member for Fort York agrees with me. He's very enthusiastic about it and I would agree. He was probably one of the members there, waiting to have the opportunity to represent his constituents. But one single member was able to hijack the committee for six months. I think that was not a very good day for democracy, that one member could get the floor in committee and speak for almost six months. As an individual member of this place, I think there's got to be a greater role.

What we're saying is not have less debate, but just that every 20 minutes, could you surrender the floor to allow another colleague the opportunity to speak, to allow another colleague the opportunity to enter into debate, to allow another colleague to perhaps inject an alternative point of view other than your own in the debate. I think that is extremely important.

If you look at the important role that we, as backbenchers, have to play in the government, we have a special responsibility. I listened with great interest to the comments just this morning in the Legislative Assembly by the member for Fort William. She got up in her place and she challenged the government backbenchers who were sitting in the House this morning. She challenged the government backbenchers. She said: "I'd like to see you get up and vote against this." "You don't have the guts to get up and vote against this," is what she directly said.

When the vote came — private members' hour is of course non-partisan, the members are free to vote how they choose and how they would like, based on their reflections. There is no party discipline. Normally the cabinet doesn't come in that morning, because it's a genuine private members' hour.

The member for Fort William was probably very surprised. When the time came, a good number, even a majority of the government backbenchers, got up and did not support the motion. She was even going to give a speech and apologize that she mentioned in her remarks — so we await that when the House comes back on August 18. There was an opportunity where government backbenchers got up in this place and voted, and I think it will have an impact in terms of the public policy direction of the province.

But the problem for many second readings of government legislation is that in the past, some 82 times in the previous 20 or 25 years, those bills have been blocked. They've only been blocked once under this Parliament and that's important to note. But 81 times, mostly under Conservative governments, I'll have you know, 12 members rose in their places and blocked a vote. I think that was inherently undemocratic and these rule changes will change that. They'll allow for more debate, more democracy.

It will also allow for more debate on third reading of private members' bills. Right now, the private members' bills presented by my colleagues in this place, on both the opposition and the government side, compete with government orders. They compete with opposition day motions and they don't often have the opportunity to be

debated. There are some very important pieces of legislation that members of provincial Parliament, as individual members, have brought to Queen's Park to have debated and they deserve the opportunity to go to third reading once they leave committee.

The provisions allowing for more debate, more democracy contained in the motion that we should have the opportunity to vote on will allow us to perhaps consider the private member's bill presented by my colleague the member for Scarborough East. It was passed here on second reading almost a year ago. It's been through committee; it's been sent back here. Perhaps one night they could say, "Listen, next Thursday night or next Wednesday night, why don't we deal with two private members' bills for that three-hour block and allow a vote?" The member for Hamilton West presented an excellent private member's bill with respect to the heritage of Ontario by establishing for the first time a tartan in Ontario, the Tartan Act. There is a good bill that could have the potential to come up and participate and that's something that's very important.

Some other important private members' bills we would have liked to have seen: Bill 33, the bill presented by my colleague the member for Durham Centre. That didn't get to committee. There was no committee that was able to consider Bill 33, and you wonder why, because I think, as I know the member for Durham Centre would agree, that democracy has three essential components: Members of provincial Parliament should have a right to introduce a bill, they should have a right to have that bill debated in this assembly for each of us to bring some thoughts to the table —

**Mr Marchese:** He's been up more than 20 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Member for Fort York, come to order.

**Mr Baird:** — and finally, we should have the ability to vote on that bill, that voting is an essential part of democracy, that being able to cast a decision is very important.

On Bill 33, this Legislative Assembly was denied that opportunity. They said: "Yes, you can introduce; yes, you can debate the bill, but no, we're not going to let you have a vote. We're not going to let you stand up and cast your vote, stand up on second reading and let you say whether you're for or against." On Bill 33, there was no opportunity. Twelve members rose and the bill was sent back to square one. I know a good number of my colleagues thought that was a sad day for democracy.

This motion would change that. It's funny. The blocking of a private members' hour was instigated some 81 times, normally by a Conservative government to stop opposition private members' bills, so it shows you the non-partisan nature of this debate. I think it's important to note that this will prevent that.

Another important thing is that someone has raised the concern that we could simply bring in a government bill through the back door and have it considered as a private member's bill. It's important to note that our existing standing orders — and the amendment does not change this — does not allow for a time allocation motion on a private member's bill. You can't time-allocate a private member's bill. So if someone, this government or a future government, were to be so crass as to try to bring a



government bill through the private members' route, and the opposition was not pleased, under these standing orders they would be protected. My colleague from Fort York would be able to stand in his place and to fight for his constituents in Fort York. These rules present no challenge to that. They present no challenge to more debate, so that's simply an argument that doesn't cut it.

This motion will allow for more debate. It will allow more individual members to have the opportunity to rise to speak to the important and politically salient issues to them and to their constituencies. These motions will allow us to simply adopt the standards in a lot of cases that were either employed by the House of Commons or proposed by our colleagues in the New Democratic Party in 1991 but weren't adopted. I think that's good for democracy. I think individual MPPs, backbenchers, having more democratic rights to express the views of their constituencies will lead to greater debate, more democracy.

**Mr Marchese:** When he gets in the opposition he's going to need an hour and a half. What are you going to do?

**Mr Baird:** The member for Fort York is very enthusiastic. More debate, more democracy. These rule changes will allow him to get up and to speak. We'd be all very privileged to have the opportunity of hearing the member for Fort York and we look forward to his insightful interventions.

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**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to participate in the debate about the rule changes. I've heard some of the debate today and on previous occasions.

I must say that the previous speaker, the member for Nepean, parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, made a very straightforward argument for and in defence of the government position. For anyone who wants to hear a ministerialist, see a ministerialist and understand what ministerial careerism is all about, I think the previous 30 minutes would be as good an example as one could find.

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** Spoken from experience.

**Mr Conway:** No, I don't believe I've had quite that experience, in the sense that I was fortunate enough upon change of government in 1985 to go directly into cabinet.

I don't want to get into the debate about last night, but I tell you, it's important that somebody observe that what we just heard from the member for Nepean is the point of view of the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader. He stands here and tries to have people believe out there in television land that he's just a garden variety private member; he's not. We have before the House now a time allocation motion that attaches to very significant changes to the House rules that are the responsibility of the government House leader. The previous speaker is the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader. He's part of the broader cabinet ministerial operation. That's his right and it is his responsibility, but I think it needs to be underscored that he is not independent of the government in the way that many of the rest of the government bench is and certainly those of us in the opposition.

I also find it interesting that the previous speaker would feel that on the basis of 24 months' experience in this place, that, together with a bit of research done by the redoubtable Ms Duncan, gives him the comfort to make the rather compelling conclusions he has done.

**Mr Marchese:** She's here. She's smiling to have heard her name.

**Mr Conway:** I don't know Ms Duncan. I'm sure she's a very fine person, and she's done some —

**Mr Gilchrist:** Very redoubtable.

**Mr Conway:** I know Ms Lankin is going to address this at greater length, but I'll tell you, some of the data, as presented by the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader, is more notable for what it excluded than for what it highlighted.

It reminded me of a time about 15 years ago, when a Conservative member for Sault Ste Marie, newly elected — help me.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Russ Ramsay.

**Mr Conway:** Russ Ramsay, a very nice fellow. He'd been a broadcast executive. He was elected in a by-election in 1978 after the unfortunate death of John Rhodes, father of Paul Rhodes. Russ was here maybe six months — it was certainly within the first year of his time — and he was in a committee; I happened to be there. After a relatively short time — and Russ was a really nice guy — he decided at the end of the proceedings that spring to give a detailed report card of how he thought everybody was performing. I've got to tell you — I hope he doesn't mind — Bruce McCaffrey, who was then an upwardly mobile Conservative member from Toronto and the lead hand on the committee for the government, just went completely apoplectic.

"How dare you, Ramsay, having arrived here a few weeks ago, having been here a couple of months, make the definitive assessment of how well this committee's performing and who's doing a good job and who's doing a bad job?" Russ I think meant well, but as McCaffrey pointed out that day, there was a rather breathtaking presumption about the recently arrived Mr Ramsay. Clearly, as a member elected he had every right to do it, but certainly some of his own colleagues felt it somewhat unseemly.

To hear Mr Baird, the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader, is to make one think it was a junior version of Stanley Knowles, that he's just completed 30 years in the assembly and from that high chair of judgement and that long distance of experience he is coming down from the mountain to give tablets of enlightenment to the chamber.

But the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader, in his inimitable way, presented the ministerial case extremely well. If it doesn't do anything else, I am sure it will aid and abet his transparent and remarkable thirst for preferment in the current government caucus.

The interesting thing about the rules — and there have been some amendments. I think some of the amendments probably mitigate some of the more worrisome aspects of the original package. The package as a whole one can understand from the government's point of view, but I have to ask myself, does anybody really think they're going to work? It's the generals fighting the last war.



Successive government House leaders have gotten up and decided, on the basis of a big flap last week or last month, that rule changes were in order. I did it myself. The remarkable thing about this rather rambunctious and self-respecting Legislature, most of the time, is that it generally adjusts to the new conditions and finds new avenues of activity and of engagement.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** I think the member for Algoma makes a very good point. If people think the limitation on speeches per se is going to move everything along — I agree with the member from Algoma that it's almost certainly not going to work, because what used to be minimums will now become maximums. People who weren't going to get into the debate will say: "There's 20 minutes. I guess we'll get in there and we'll take our 20 minutes."

Many speakers in the course of this debate have talked about consensus, and the place runs on consensus. If any government, particularly a majority government, thinks it's going to manufacture a consensus and just damn the torpedoes, I suspect they're going to be sadly disappointed. It's hard for me to predict what the downstream adjustments in behaviour are going to be. Nobody 10 or 15 years ago imagined the petition trick that was invented here a few years ago, I guess by Mr Kormos. That's just one. The Tories, when they were in opposition here between 1990 and 1995, refined and developed new procedures that some of us oldtimers wouldn't even have thought possible. I have every confidence that the 37th and 38th legislatures will take these rules and find opportunities that the drafters and crafters never imagined and drive successive governments a bit batty.

It's too bad the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader is not here, because he's very skilful, as are a lot of those right-wing ideologues of which he is so notable a part. He's so skilful in purposely confusing the executive and the legislative branches. To hear Harris talk and Clement talk, and Gilchrist and certainly that young man from Nepean just fresh in on this highway of ambition, they talk about politics and politicians and they almost always confine themselves to the legislative side of things: "Too many politicians; we've got to reduce the number of seats. We look at these rule changes because we've got to clean up the House. The House is badly behaved on occasion."

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My question to the charming Mr Baird is, where in this package is there one constraint on the executive branch of government? Where is there one? I was saying last night that people who have looked at our political culture in Canada, whether it's provincial or national, note that it is unique for the incredible dominance of the executive, irrespective of whether the first minister is someone named Davis or Peterson or Rae or Harris. This is an executive-dominated, cabinet-dominated political culture. My question, dear Mr Baird, is where in your package is there one constraint on the powers of cabinet, on the powers of the executive branch?

I'm not going to trot out the fact that the Ottawa Citizen, for example, reported just a few months or weeks ago that Mike Harris, first minister, is spending some-

thing like a half million dollars of additional money this year over last on his executive office budget. He might have a good reason for that, but I'll tell you, the executive branch is not diminishing in its spending power and in its political power. We saw the spectacle of what was done to Messrs Carr and Skarica and Murdoch in recent weeks. I'm not really here to debate that.

My question tonight for the ministerialists, for the John Bairds of the world, is, what in this package is there to constrain the executive branch of government? I can't find one scintilla of restriction on cabinet government, not one. If you take your view — and this goes back to a point I was making last night — that after an election all Parliament is is an electoral college, a rubber stamp, that we're here to do the King's business and nothing else, I suppose we need not worry. But I'll accept that they've taken away 27 seats. We've legislated a reduction of the assembly by a factor of 30%, or is it 20%? It's 27 seats, whatever percentage that is. We have substantially downsized the number of elected members because there's too much government, there are too many politicians! We're now going to say there are —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** That's not the only reason, I say to the member from Lanark, but it was certainly the principal reason advertised —

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** Lanark-Renfrew, please.

**Mr Conway:** Lanark-Renfrew. It was the principal reason advertised by the leader of the government, Mr Harris. So we have reduced the number of members of the Legislature. With this package, we're going to reduce the speaking opportunities for a number of members. We're going to reduce the opportunities for Parliament to get notice of executive intention. We're going to reduce or eliminate the constraints on the recall of Parliament.

I can't find, I say to Mr Dave Johnson, government Leader — where in your package is there any constraint whatsoever?

**Mr Jordan:** There never was.

**Mr Conway:** I say to the parliamentary assistant, tourism, another man who has crossed the divide, once you accept the seal, once you accept the preferment, you are to some extent, my dear Jordan, not an independent man, and we've got conflict-of-interest guidelines that make that point. Most members here don't remember that for a long time, if you accepted an appointment to cabinet the first thing you had to do was resign your seat. Why did you have to do that? Because your first duty was to your constituents as the member of Parliament, and if you decided to accept a King's commission to go to the King's council, you had to resign and get a new and independent sanction to do that.

**Mr Jordan:** I was there when George Gomme resigned.

**Mr Conway:** You might have been. I doubt that was the case. It ceased to be applicable in Ontario in 1941. I don't believe Mr Gomme was elected in 1941.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** I'll have to defer to the wisdom of your greater age.

But my point is a very serious point: Where is there any constraint on government in this? I'm here to talk



about the package. The currency of the right wing today is that there's too much government. Let's think about that for a moment. If the analysts all say government in this culture is primarily cabinet government, aren't we striking out at the weak sister? I think we are. I said last night, and I'll repeat now, having been a government House leader, I can tell you this is every government House leader's interest.

I look at this and I say to myself, "Boy, would I have liked some of this in 1987 or 1988." Even in my wildest fantasy I wouldn't have imagined it, because I think of what Norm Sterling in his Napoleonic splendour would have done, I think about just how wild and uncontrollable Ernie Eves and Mike — the things that Harris and Eves would have done I can't even talk about. In the consensual environment you didn't do it.

I remember the day I did something in here and Bob Rae's brother, God love him, had died and there was a funeral. It was the last thing on my mind. There was some part of some rule package I was involved with and the place went nuts — "Conway, you are just grotesque in your insensitivity" — because it was Bob Rae's brother's funeral. I can assure you it was the last thing on my mind, and it was a very real tragedy what happened to David Rae. These are sensitive issues and this place runs successfully only when there is a reasonable regard for those sensitivities and for the consensus that arises out of that.

Part of me wants to say, "Go and do this, do it." I'll get the last laugh, because you'll be sitting there some day, just thinking, "I thought we fixed that." This is a dyke of 1,000 leakholes and governments have at best 100 fingers. You're not going to be able to plug all the holes in this dyke.

I looked in vain for anything here that suggested constraint on government. There's a report that sits up in the library gathering dust. It's the fourth report of the Camp commission on the Ontario Legislature, issued I think in September 1975. It's worth a read. I look at this package of proposals and it's the very thing that Dalton Camp, Doug Fisher and Farquhar Oliver tried to fix 22 years ago. They came here and said, "What are some of the problems?"

One of the problems they identified was the allocation of time. It was just loosey-goosey. There was little or no notice. There was no business statement. It was just a joke and privately everybody was saying, "We've got to fix it." What did we do? We moved to the business statement. We moved to the beginnings of a calendar. We moved to a number of things that we're just washing away with this. It's not as though we haven't been here before. Maybe it's a new culture and maybe we've all changed our ways. I doubt it, but hey, who am I?

It's like work to rule. You've got a contract, there's lots of very specific language as to what management should do and what labour should do, but it's amazing how the workplace functions when there's a reasonable degree of harmony and mutual respect. Boy, a lot of things get done that are quite efficient and quite acceptable. Then the consensus starts to break down, there are talks that aren't going very well and what do we get?

We get work to rule when people start to actually pick up the contract, go to subclause (vi) of section 9 on page

57 and say, "This is what we have technically agreed to do." That Toronto-Woodstock train that just kind of routinely buzzed along at 55 miles an hour all of a sudden is going at 37 miles an hour. It's moving and it's heading through the lush farm lands of western Ontario but it's not going nearly as fast as everybody had expected or as they had been accustomed to.

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Look at what's happened here the last 10 days. We've spent an inordinate amount of time on this kind of procedural material when we would normally be dealing with the rush of material that we always get at the end of the session, whether it's in June or in December. We were treated to the spectacle this afternoon — I wasn't, actually. I came in and I saw a bunch of press people out there who said, "You just missed it, you missed a real show." The otherwise charming Minister of Transportation has gone ballistic because apparently he's been shuffled out of the deck with his truck safety bill. I'm not going to repeat what the press said the minister did and said.

It is very customary around here when things are going reasonably well to get a lot of stuff done on the nod in the evening or at the end of session. But if there is a lack of trust, if there is a sense that there is not balance and fairness, it's not going to happen. And you cannot write a set of rules that is going to give you the kind of expedition you want.

I must say, to hear the member for Nepean, the parliamentary assistant to the government House leader, talk about the speeches of the opposition and their content — Mr Baird, long experienced in the Ontario Legislature, feels that some of the speeches he's heard just don't excite him in terms of content. As the professor emeritus of the Ontario Legislature, he just doesn't think some of these speeches are up to snuff. Really, Mr Baird.

We have budget speeches now that are rather different than when I came here. We have a little show in the House on budget day. The chancellor comes in with his props, lots of unanimous consents to make it all happen; it's quite a production. Most of that's done by consent. I'm going to tell you, there's a lot of froth and foam and politics in that speech aimed at the nightly news irrespective of whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a man named McKeough, a man named Laughren or a man named Eves.

I wonder, does the professor emeritus from Nepean think about whether or not that kind of performance meets with his rigorous new test? If Mr Baird is going to be the proud son of Stanley Knowles in this Parliament, and something other than the Charlie McCarthy to some Edgar Bergen in the Premier's office, he might just want to reflect on some of what the treasury bench is allowed to do both substantively and formally.

But you see, I don't think that's Mr Baird's interest at all. Mr Baird is a man on the make. He's a man with preferment on his mind. He's here to do the bidding of Mr Dave Johnson, the government House leader, who I invite, as he's in the precinct tonight, to tell me before this debate is over where I could find in this package one constraint on the power of executive government. I might be repeating it, Mr Johnson, because you have not



throughout the weeks made any response to the criticism. I say again very seriously that those people who have looked at our political culture have said it is remarkable for the extent to which it is cabinet-dominated, and the authorities are everywhere. Where, my friends, are the constraints on cabinet?

Our friend Turnbull is here from Post Road and he'll know because of his lineage that in the Mother of Parliaments you have of course that wonderful spectacle where most notably it is the Conservative caucus that will stand up on many occasions and say to 10 Downing Street, "To hell with you." People forget that one of the most successful and powerful Prime Ministers in modern Britain, Margaret Thatcher, was brought down by her own parliamentary caucus.

Can we imagine that happening here? Could we imagine in our wildest fantasy John Baird, Esq, late of Bells Corners, formerly of Mr Perrin Beatty's ministerial suite, having sufficient independence and political testosterone to stand up and do what his colleagues at the Carlton Club did in Britain a few years ago? I think not. He's too worried about the next train leaving to the office at the end of the second floor, east wing, of this building.

But I say again, I'm quite prepared to look at rule changes. I have as much sympathy as anybody for some of the problems.

**Mr Turnbull:** Tell us about Mr Nunziata.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, it was once said of imperial Britain that she had no permanent friends and no permanent enemies, just permanent interests. I've said repeatedly over the last couple of days, it doesn't matter whether the first minister is a Liberal named Peterson or Chrétien, a Social Crediter named Vander Zalm or Wacky Bennett, or a Tory named Harris, the infectious disease is everywhere the same.

Parliament has a responsibility to put some reasonable constraint on that cabinet. If you think the way that's going to be done is by getting rid of 27 members of the Legislature and reducing the speaking time for the honourable member from Kicking Horse Pass from 40 minutes to 20 minutes, you are dreaming in Technicolor. I understand the concern about filibusters and I've said before I don't like filibusters, I loathe bell ringing. Some of these antics are totally repugnant to me. My experience is that, generally speaking, they are only resorted to when consensus is gone, tempers are absolutely stratospheric and there is a sense that there is just no alternative.

The example I was using last night: Harvie Andre and Tom Cossitt. I know they could be hell-raisers in their own way, but the day they stormed the Speaker's dais in Ottawa 17 years ago, that famous scene where they looked like they were almost going to do something to Speaker Francis, was I'm sure not what they wanted to do, but their anger and frustration over what they thought was the totally wrongheaded quality of the national energy policy is what drove them to it. Not only was the policy bad, but the technical measures the government House leader of the time had attached to that repugnant policy just pushed them over the edge.

So I say again, where is the balance? Where is there some evidence in this package of proposals to restrain the

dominant cabinet that the analysts say we've got, not just in Ontario, the too-dominant cabinet that we've got in much of our system, certainly here in Ontario. I don't see anything.

I don't expect it from people whose only ambition in life is to get the word "Hon" before their Christian name. I don't expect the member, the parliamentary assistant — he's already half in the door. John Baird is — well, I won't because I was already bad today. But I say to the institution generally, where, what kind of constraint? Do we have any interest in amending this package to say, "No, maybe there should just be" — I mean, the idea that we're not going to have a business schedule. That's just discourteous, if you think about it.

If you've got any self-respect at all, you say, "Surely, we're entitled to the courtesy of a business statement." The other day, I say to Mr Johnson who has the reputation of being a rather nice fellow, it was discourteous in the extreme to behave as he did when the House was trying to deal with the Grossman funeral and the business of the last week. If I had done that as government House leader, I would have expected to have been really put upon. Caucuses were trying to organize themselves: Who can go to the funeral? Who is going to stay behind? What's the business of the place?

If the member from Manitoulin is here, anticipating there is going to be a debate about the Fish and Game Act, or the member for Oxford wants to talk about some part of the Planning Act, they have a right to reasonable notice. We didn't give that and we didn't give it for a reason. Sometimes it's unavoidable, but I'm telling you what concerns me most about this package is there is absolutely no constraint on the overwhelming and the ever-increasing power of cabinet, and in many of its technical respects we're going back to a time that Dalton Camp and Doug Fisher said 22 years ago was something you should leave behind.

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## ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell):** I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

**Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker):** The following are the bills to which Her Honour has assented:

Bill 105, An Act to renew the partnership between the province, municipalities and the police and to enhance community safety / *Projet de loi 105, Loi visant à renouveler le partenariat entre la province, les municipalités et la police et visant à accroître la sécurité de la collectivité*

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Nursing Act, 1991 and to make consequential amendments to the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act, the Medical Laboratory Technology Act, 1991, the Respiratory Therapy Act, 1991 and the Vital Statistics Act / *Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les infirmières et infirmiers et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur la protection contre les rayons X, à la Loi de 1991 sur les techno-*

logistes de laboratoire médical, à la Loi de 1991 sur les inhalothérapeutes et à la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil

Bill 129, An Act to stimulate job growth, to reduce taxes and to implement other measures contained in the 1997 Budget / Projet de loi 129, Loi visant à stimuler la croissance de l'emploi, à réduire les impôts et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1997

Bill 135, An Act to amend the Regional Municipality of Waterloo Act and to make consequential amendments / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la municipalité régionale de Waterloo et apportant des modifications corrélatives.

**The Speaker:** That was well done.

**Mr Marchese:** Especially the French.

**The Speaker:** Yes, and that was the first one he's done, so I think that's well done. Further debate?

#### TIME ALLOCATION (continued)

**Mr Marchese:** It is a pleasure to follow the member for Renfrew North as we speak to this motion on time allocation as it relates to the changes to the House rules.

I want to begin by saying that the member for Nepean has made a number of references to my colleague from Cochrane South who was quoted as saying, "If you can't say something in 20 minutes, you've got a problem." He made fun of the fact that the member for Cochrane South said that, but all of you who have followed the member for Nepean's speech will realize that he took the whole 30 minutes.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** No.

**Mr Marchese:** He took the whole 30 minutes, member for Dovercourt, every last second. I was trying to remind him that he was going beyond his 20 minutes, but he would pay me no heed. That was quite clear, and why? It was clear that the member for Nepean had a lot to say. I could tell that, and he completed, rounded all of his 30 minutes, the full time because he needed the time. I understood very clearly that the member had a lot more to say and I knew that if the House leader or the whip of his party allowed him to he would have gone on, I say, interminably —

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** An hour and a half, maybe.

**Mr Marchese:** — I would suggest at least an hour and a half. I know the member for Nepean isn't listening now so it's a bit of a problem, but I suspect he would have needed a whole hour at least to say what he wanted to say.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** He's spoken already.

**Mr Marchese:** It's true; he already spoke, so he doesn't have to listen. You're quite right, member for Yorkview. But it is clear that once you are on a roll and you have something to say, even if you're reading the speech, as the member for Nepean was doing some of the time, you've got a lot to say, so to restrict the members of substance and form would be a problem. Member for Nepean, I suggest to you that what you said of others should apply to you, but clearly you yourself don't have

the discipline to control yourself, and it was obvious to me.

That's a problem and I wanted to state that for the record, because I think members should have the time they need to be able to say what they need to say. To curtail that time is of no benefit to the government or to individual members either in opposition or the government.

I want to stay in context because the member for Nepean talks about the goal.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I would ask the government benches to please just come to order to some degree. I want to hear them — particularly the three wise men on the front bench there. Member for Fort York.

**Mr Marchese:** Mr Speaker, it's actually the four wise men who are not sitting in their seats, but that's okay. They're chatting and they've got a lot to say because they were conferring with each other about the speech the member for Nepean made. I understand. If they don't have time to listen to the member for Fort York, that's all right. Member for Nepean, not to worry.

But I want to put the whole thing in context because the member says —

**Mr Baird:** I can quote your speeches verbatim.

**Mr Marchese:** But you've got to have the natural style, member for Nepean, because when you force that, it doesn't work. It has to be natural, and if it isn't natural, don't do it. Don't mimic, because it won't work.

He says the goal of these changes is to eliminate the tomfoolery. It should have begun with the member for Nepean —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** But it didn't end there. Clearly, I realize that's not the goal or the intent of these rule changes. It's something else. To find that something else we need to give the context. They hate context because they always say: "Speak to the bill. Stick to the bill." Without the context we won't be able to understand the significance of some of these guys or the policy changes they're introducing.

To get a glimpse of this government, all we have to do is refer to Bill 26, in which this government repeatedly demonstrates its disinterest in the Legislature and the democratic process. What does Bill 26 do? I tell you, you've got to go back to that. You go back to that and you get a sense, the feel of this government.

Bill 26: What does it do? It allows the Minister of Municipal Affairs — poor Minister Leach, man, has been beleaguered in this place.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Be nice.

**Mr Marchese:** I quite agree. You have been —

**Hon Mr Leach:** Be nice.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm trying; I'm trying.

**Mr Martin:** Be gentle. He's had a hard day.

**Mr Marchese:** He has been beleaguered. He has been in charge of so many bills he's had to carry on those poor shoulders, which with age get weaker. With age they get weaker and he's had to carry that himself two years in a row. I suggest to you all that's a heavy load to carry, but because —

**Mr Martin:** He needs help.



**Mr Marchese:** He needed help. What does Bill 26 do? It allows him to completely restructure municipalities without presenting those plans to the Legislature. Speaker, do you understand what I'm saying?

**The Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr Marchese:** Because the minister was carrying this heavy load on those weakening shoulders, he thought: "How do I lift the load from my back? Well, I'll simply pass the bill that allows municipalities to restructure themselves, and if it doesn't work I will appoint some hack, a henchman, a hired gun to do the dirty job for me," because he can't carry it alone. It's a tough job. So he allows through Bill 26 something that gives the suggestion of this government in terms of its autocratic desires to rule. It is a very autocratic government.

When, through Bill 26, you give yourselves those powers, I suggest to you that you're getting into that field of authoritarianism. I know these are words they don't like. They hate the whole sense of what the words "authority," "authoritarianism," "autocracy," "anti-democratic" carry. They don't like that.

**Mr Martin:** Dictatorship.

**Mr Marchese:** "Dictatorship" is a word they despise because they like to see themselves as great revolutionary democrats. Bill 26 contradicts any of that, and it's quite obvious.

What else does my good friend M. Leach do with Bill 26, not just M. Leach but his Premier? He allows and creates a commission completely beyond public control with a mandate to radically rearrange our health care services: that restructuring commission.

**Mr Martin:** Can you appeal to the court? Can it be brought to court, their decision?

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**Mr Marchese:** Beyond the courts, that restructuring commission; that restructuring commission has given incredible power unto itself through Bill 26. I suggest to you, those who are watching, that they use this commission and the commissioner as a foil for their dirty, reptilian deeds. It's a foil.

We are doing through a commission and a commissioner what they are afraid to do. The Minister of Health constantly says: "It is beyond our control. They are independent. I am not the boss of the health care system. The restructuring commission is in charge, not me." The poor guy says: "I'm not the boss of the system, somebody else is," someone else we have empowered to have that power.

It is a foil for their dirty deeds, as if somehow the public is befuddled by that structure they've set up. They're not confused by it. They know it's you. They know that something you have created is a creature of yours and therefore, by correlation, is something that is your responsibility, and you need to take responsibility for those structures, but they don't want to take responsibility for that.

**Mr Martin:** Absolutely, they have to, they're the government.

**Mr Marchese:** Sure they have to. The public is not deceived by that kind of dissimulation. They're not deceived by it. So that was Bill 26.

Get a glint again of the taste of this government as you look at the amalgamation of Metropolitan Toronto. What

do these guys do? Do you think they consulted with these municipalities? Were they given an opportunity to consult with each other how best to restructure, as they did with Bill 26, allowing many of the other municipalities that opportunity? No, they didn't do that with Metro. With Metro they decided to use government fiat. They flexed their strong muscles, weak in some cases, but they flexed them none the less. They said to Metropolitan Toronto: "You have no say and, by the way, even if you have a referendum, we're not going to listen to the results of that referendum."

Ladies and gentlemen who are watching this, do you get a flavour of this government? Do you get a flavour of this autocracy, the stench of this autocracy? Certainly it flows through this chamber to your very chamber where you are. Surely you get the flavour because the stench is overwhelming in here. I can imagine how it is out there.

This government on its amalgamation of the Metropolitan city governments has shown itself to have no respect for local decision-making, no respect whatsoever for democracy as it relates to our place here in Metropolitan Toronto — but Chatham-Kent too. In Chatham-Kent they have shown complete disrespect for those communities. They hired this guy who's got a title, Dr Meyboom, to go there and essentially, in his autocratic way, Monsieur Leach, the guy went there and told them what was good for them.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** Why?

**Mr Marchese:** They were not given an opportunity to solve those matters, even though they were close to doing so.

**Mr Spina:** Why?

**Mr Marchese:** Why? Because it's easier to give the henchman you guys hired big bucks, because you gave him big bucks, to do the dirty deed. The guy was quite happy to take the money and do your bidding, to be your foil for the dirty deed. He did it. So he restructures with the displeasure of those city councillors and many of the communities in Kent that have discovered or uncovered the dissimulation of this government and are fighting back. They're fighting back because due process was not respected in Chatham-Kent either.

This government, through the member for Nepean, poor member for Nepean who's been charged with a heavy responsibility to be the foil for the government, the fall guy — David Johnson, Chairman of Management Board, said: "It wasn't me, it's that guy from Nepean, it's a few other guys who got together to discuss these rule changes." The Management Board minister said, "I had nothing to do with it, poor Mike Harris had nothing to do with it," as if the poor guy doesn't know what he's doing. He was commissioned to do the dirty deed.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** Commissioned?

**Mr Marchese:** Commissioned indeed. I won't talk about whether there is an avaricious desire by the member for Nepean to be in those first ranks as quickly as possible. I can't speak to that, but I am certain that Mike Harris said: "Johnny, I know you can do a good job for me; I can't promise you anything, but will you do it?" and the member for Nepean said, "Of course, Mikey, anything you say." He's the Premier, what is he going to say? He's the fall guy, but he's not the only fall guy because I understand there are two other guys. Is that



correct, member for Nepean? There are two other people working with you or more or less?

**Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]):** The entire caucus.

**Mr Marchese:** You were alone?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** He could not have been alone. There must have been other dirty hands. There must have been the imprints of others on that report.

**Hon Mr Leach:** A few other guys.

**Mr Marchese:** A few other guys at least, right?

I tell you the imprints of Mike Harris are certainly on these rule changes, including the young reactionaries because it's not fair to call you radicals — reactionaries. Because there is fervour when you're young, you say: "Oh, gee, we've got to change the rules around here. We're sick and tired of the opposition stalling our bills."

Imagine, sick and tired of the opposition. They have discombobulated this place with the multiplicity of bills, discombobulated the members of the opposition, their own members, and the people who've had to react to the multiplicity of bills this government has changed. They have introduced so many bills with incredible celerity that you needed a machine gun on the other side to stop these guys.

Bill 26 was passed rather quickly. Remember employment equity? My God, a couple of weeks, it was over. Speaker, you remember employment equity — you were here then when we were in government — it took us years. The Liberals consulted on the issue of employment equity. We consulted for years. This government comes with a majority, because they've got a majority, and they pass an immediate bill to repeal employment equity in a couple of weeks.

They have the power. You guys are the bosses. You've got the wheels, you have the power, you've got the numbers to be able to essentially do what you want, and you've done it. You have been able to do what you've wanted all these two years. Do you need more rule changes to be able to pass bills more quickly? My God, haven't you done enough damage already? My sense is that you know you have. My sense is that you know you have probably alienated half of the province in two years. My suspicion is that in the next two years we're likely not to see too many bills.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** What?

**Mr Marchese:** Very likely. That's why I'm wondering why you need the rule changes. First of all, you've got the power, you've got the numbers, you've got a majority government. Why would you need to do it? That's why I ask, why do you pursue this? In the next two years, minister of privatization, you're going to go after welfare people again and you're going to —

**Hon Mr Sampson:** No.

**Mr Marchese:** Please, allow me and then you come around when it's your turn. Then you're going to go after unions, is my suspicion. Why? Because you need an enemy, right? You need an enemy for your Conservative friends out there.

Here's the strategy. Mikey comes and says to you fine boys: "I know you guys are tired. We've been here for too long." My God, much too long. You guys haven't

been able to have a rest, no holiday. You haven't even been able to go back to the public to explain the things you've done, to educate the public on the things you have done. You haven't had time.

So he says: "This is it, boys. We've got a few more things to do. We've got rent control that we want out of the way quickly because we don't want it to drag on beyond September and October. Let's get a few of these dirty things that could linger and cause some problems. Let's get them out of the way. Call the House back in August and deal with all of these issues immediately. I know you're tired, but if we do it now, then come September, October, November, it'll be a little easier and you can rest. You'll have time to go back to your Conservative crowds and remind them how your plan is working." I love that, "The plan is working." It's not working, I can tell you that.

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**Hon Mr Sampson:** It is.

**Mr Marchese:** Mike says to the guys: "You'll be able to go back to the community and tell them your plan is working. Educate the public."

**Hon Mr Sampson:** It is.

**Mr Marchese:** I know, I know, minister of privatization, but you haven't had time to go back and talk to your community. How do they know whether your plan is working? You haven't had a chance to go and explain to them all the wonderful things you guys are doing, all these jobs that are coming in place, and yet unemployment is the highest in your history and mine. Member from privatization, unemployment is at its height under you guys, you fine guys, you guys who laud and put the private sector on this great pedestal, you guys who talk about all these jobs, yet unemployment is at its highest. You should croak when you say the plan is working.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** How many jobs did you guys create?

**Mr Marchese:** It's not how many jobs we created. You've got the wheel since then. It's up to you. Mr Terence Young talks about these young people feeling inspired and feeling great and having the confidence, this and that. They are desperate under you guys. There is desperation out there because youth unemployment is at its highest under your fine policies. The member from privatization waves with his hand saying that isn't true. I don't know what statistics you're looking at, member from somewhere, minister of privatization, you who laud the private sector. Unemployment is at its highest.

**Hon Mr Sampson:** No.

**Mr Marchese:** What do you mean "no," Sampson? Speaker, I tell you, you've got to have your feet firmly on the ground when you're in this place. You can't mythologize the issues. You can build on mythology and create them yourself, but I'll tell you, Sampson, you've got to have your feet deeply rooted on the ground. You, my friend, are soaring on your own creation.

**Mr Martin:** They're starting to believe their own bullshit.

**The Speaker:** Order. That was, I'm sure, a mistake. I would ask the member to withdraw. That's you, Sault Ste Marie.

**Mr Martin:** I'm not in my right chair.



**The Speaker:** Get in your chair.

**Mr Martin:** I'm out of my chair.

**The Speaker:** This isn't a long debating point. You haven't got a lot of time.

**Mr Martin:** I withdraw.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Mr Marchese:** It's so difficult to say what you want to say when you feel it's correct and you can't say it. You can't be graphic, otherwise you get called by the Speaker withdraw it. It's sad. They should change the rules to allow us to speak with images and graphically, things the people who are watching would understand. As it is — the clerks understand this — we have to sanitize our comments. We have to put all of our comments in antiseptic before we can utter them in this place. It's not good. It takes the heart out of what we feel.

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Okay, stop the clock, please. Point of order, the member for York East.

**Mr Parker:** Mr Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of my friend from Fort York to demonstrate the wisdom of the rule changes that the government has proposed, but we are still operating under rules that require a member to stick to the topic when he speaks in this chamber. I'd remind the House that the topic we are here to speak upon is a time allocation motion.

**The Speaker:** I understand that. It's a time allocation motion on the rule changes and I think he was within the bounds of the rule changes motion that's before the House. Start the clock, please.

**Mr Marchese:** Speaker, I appreciate your stopping the clock for me because you appreciate the fact that we need time. I know you were here and you know we need the time.

The member for York East, I was talking about Bill 26 as a way of showing this government is authoritarian and autocratic. I was speaking to the megacity to show this government is autocratic; nothing democratic about this government in terms of these changes. I'm speaking to the rule changes to show that these members have a great desire to be authoritarian, just as the commissioner said a few days ago of Minister Leach, that he comes out of a structure that's authoritarian and he reproduces it in this place. Not only he but many of the members who come into power feel they need to be authoritarian to do what they need to do. That's what these rule changes are all about: to give themselves greater authority than they already have. They have the authority to do what they want and it isn't sufficient.

**Mr Martin:** They want more.

**Mr Marchese:** They want more. There's a rapacious desire to have more power, as if they don't have enough.

**Mr Martin:** That's an acceptable word.

**Mr Marchese:** "Rapacious" is a good word?

**Mr Martin:** Yes, it's a good word, very descriptive.

**Mr Marchese:** How many more members do you want to be able to give yourselves more power? You already have it. What do these guys want, Speaker?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** They want to be able to make changes that would permit my friend from Brampton, who's speaking to me in Italian again —

**The Speaker:** That's out of order, member for Brampton.

**Mr Marchese:** No, I don't mind it. It's okay. I just thought I'd alert you to the problem.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Member for Brampton, if you don't mind, I just want to continue. I only have a few minutes left.

**Mr Spina:** Is this your speech?

**Mr Marchese:** It is mine. They want to pass two bills within a six-day period. Right now, you need six to seven, eight days at times to be able to pass one bill. These guys want to change the rules so they can pass two bills in six days.

The member for Nepean I don't believe even touched that particular issue. Of course not, because obviously he only wants to make notable what he wants to say and subsume or diminish other matters of great importance to the opposition and to the general public. What does this do? This proposed change and others allow the government to pass more legislation in less time and reduce the accountability mechanisms that are used by the members of the opposition and the public.

It isn't just a matter of reducing my time from an hour and a half to 40 minutes and from a half-hour to 20 minutes. That might be acceptable to some, but I argue, as the member for Nepean demonstrated, that we need the time to be able to communicate a whole lot of things we have to say.

This particular measure that they're introducing to pass two bills within six days doesn't just limit my ability to represent my district, but it limits the ability of the general public to make this government accountable. This government refuses to make itself accountable. That's what this bill is all about.

If you recall, we had here 100 people — I'm not sure you were here that day; oh yes, you or somebody else — demanding to be heard on these rule changes. They were saying, "What about us and where do we as the public fit into these rule changes?" You can make it appear that it has only to do with the members of the opposition, but I tell you from now until August more and more people will understand that you're just not curtailing my own time, but you are curtailing the time of the general public to monitor your actions and to make you accountable. They want to be able to scrutinize what you do and they want to make sure there's sufficient time for themselves and the media to have an opportunity to be critical, when necessary, of the bills you have to present here.

The member for Nepean is trying to support me and give me a hand here: an article that says, "5,000 Jobs Coming to the City of Nepean."

2030

**Hon Mr Sampson:** There's nothing wrong with that. Perfect.

**Mr Marchese:** Nothing wrong with that at all, minister of privatization, but I tell you, your plan to privatize will not create us more jobs. We have a great deal of history, not just in this country but elsewhere, of people who have done what you have done, where others have been where you want to go. Privatization does nothing except to lay people off and reduce the services they provide. That's what it does.



The member for Nepean says, "We've got 5,000 jobs coming," but unemployment is still high. They have to make themselves accountable. They have to account for the high unemployment levels in this country.

But talking about rule changes again, Speaker: I'm assuming one of these fine Tories will speak after me for a half hour or so, and I'm sure they'll need the time. They've got to speak to the issue of changing the rules to allow them to sit beyond 6 o'clock, to move a motion to sit until 9:30, allowing them in six days to move two bills. Speak to that and tell me, you fine Tory members, with your reptilian tactics, how that is going to help democracy in Ontario. It won't.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Reptilian tactics?

**Mr Marchese:** It's graphic. I know they feel the word. They feel the crust of the word "reptilian." Maybe they prefer amphibian; I'm not sure. But the public understands it, because they feel those crusts just peeling away from the bodies as they have to deal with this government that doesn't listen and refuses to make itself accountable.

Restricting speeches from an half and a half to 40 minutes is not going to solve your problem. We argue that if you want your members to have more time, you build in that time; build it into the debates. Extend the time for the debate of those bills. Don't shorten the time. If you reduce the passage of two bills into six days, you're not giving us any time and you're certainly not giving yourself any time if you have a desire to speak, without notes or with notes.

If you want to speak, ask Premier Harris; ask the front bench to help you guys out. Tell them, "You've gone too fast," and that you guys need time to reflect on the bills, to speak on the bills, to get back to your own community so you can defend them with courage, which you do not have at the moment. You guys have no courage, some of you, except Steve Gilchrist. He's a brave soldier. He's come into my riding several times. He is one of the bravest soldiers I've seen of this Tory government. I cannot say the same of too many others, who quiver with fear.

All I want is for the public to know that these changes affect them. Come August, we want you to come, be part of these debates and tell the government what you feel.

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** It is a great honour, as always, to participate in the debate of this House. It is not only an honour, it is a privilege. It is a privilege to participate in substantive debate in this House. I say that not as a parliamentary assistant, not as a member of provincial Parliament representing my constituents in Brampton. I say this as a citizen in Ontario. It is a privilege to have not only the right but the duty and obligation to speak in this House. Unfortunately, it is a right and a duty and an obligation that sometimes we in this chamber take not so seriously at all.

I have been in this House, it is true, for just a bit over two years, not a long time in the whole span of the history of Ontario or indeed of Canada. The member from Renfrew, I thought in a tone that was more than a little bit sarcastic, made mention of the fact that my friend and colleague from Nepean and persons such as myself and other colleagues — there are 62 of us, I

believe, who are here for the first time on this side of the House — have not been here for as long as the 20-year veteran from across the way.

But I would have to say this: We have participated in Ontario society. We have watched this chamber as outsiders, as citizens, as spectators. We have watched it over a great period of time. By that calculation and by that experience, I believe we have something important to say, those of us who are seen as neophytes; important to say, because sometimes when you're in this House for a long period of time — dare I say it? — perspective is not the first hallmark of your personality, and sometimes the wider context of why we are here is lost. Can I say that, Mr Speaker?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Clement:** I think the majority are on the yes on that.

The point is this: This privilege we have in this House should not be ignored, should not be something we take lightly but is something we should wear heavily, because we do it not only as citizens but as representatives of our constituents. That is why I make a plea to this House today that we do take into consideration that privilege and that we do act in this House in a way that is not only testament to ourselves but testament to this great province of Ontario. That means acting to a standard, Mr Speaker, that I know you would like us to set — you have said so on several occasions — a standard that all of us, and I put myself in that category, perhaps do not meet sometimes but that we should aspire to.

The question I put before this House is, what sort of rules can we structure that underline that it is a privilege to be here and that we should be engaged at all times, or at least aspire to be engaged at all times, in real, substantive debate on behalf of all the citizens of Ontario? I would put it to you that these rules are meant in their own way to prolong and elongate the substantive portion of debates.

We know there will be theatrics, we know there will be protests in this chamber for years to come. The protests are there because that is the role of the opposition. Absolutely; they should, and their duty is to oppose. They have defined that duty to oppose to mean duty to oppose at all times and in all circumstances, and it is their right to do so. But it should be done in a context of democratic debate, of aspiring to embody the privilege it is to be here, and I think the public expects us to conduct ourselves in certain ways. Protest is important, no question about it; that is part and parcel of democratic politics. But this chamber should be all about substantive debate, not only about theatrics, not only about protest, not only about getting your leader or yourself at the top of the 6 o'clock news. It should be about substantive debate, clear-headed debate.

What I like about these rules is that I as a private member, I as a backbencher, have greater opportunity to be engaged in that debate, greater opportunity for my private member's motions to participate, greater opportunity through greater rotation to be part of the substantive debate of this House.

2040

The honourable member for Renfrew North earlier said, quite dramatically: "Where are the constraints on the



executive branch of government? I see the constraints on the legislative branch," he said, "but where are the constraints on the executive branch?" Fair enough question, but I want to assure him and those who might be watching that this is one part of a package of how we have to get our democracy, our chamber, our accountability into the 21st century, where other jurisdictions are already. We've lagged a bit behind.

The member for Dovercourt and others know that I feel very strongly that this chamber is important to the democratic traditions of this province, certainly, but there are times when citizens in this province have the right and the obligation, but certainly the right, to have a direct say in the choices that affect their lives, most notably through binding referendums. I want to assure the honourable member opposite that that is part of the construct of the new democracy that is responsive and accountable to the citizens of Ontario that will occur over time in the weeks and months ahead to ensure that people have a direct say in the important decisions of their lives.

When the honourable member asks, "Where is the constraint on the executive branch?" we are proposing — and the honourable member for Dovercourt has seen us in action at committee on this very point — that one of the biggest constraints on the executive council can be the people of Ontario, as it should be. We are accountable to them. Not only is the executive accountable to the caucus or the executive accountable to the chamber, but it is accountable to the people of Ontario. I would ask honourable members to keep that in mind as they discuss these changes, in the proper context of how we as an assembly must bring this democracy into the 21st century. That is a very important point to make.

I agree with the honourable members that there is a role for protest, a role for getting your point of view across in this chamber, but I plead with them that we use our time not for the theatrics, not for the protest day in, day out, but for the substantive debate that makes this a special chamber, a chamber that is used not only by matter of right by all us honourable members but because it is a privilege to serve here on behalf of our constituents, on behalf of the citizens of Ontario, a privilege that I do not take lightly and that I hope the honourable members will not take lightly in the future either.

**Mr Sergio:** I'm delighted to join the debate as well. I was enjoying the company of some colleagues while we were listening to the presentation from the member for Brampton South.

We are dealing with two things tonight, I would say. One is the time allocation for debate on the changes to the House rules, which has taken some time in the last few days. I will try to comment on both: the changes as proposed by the government and the time limit on the debate itself.

The rules of the House are provided for the benefit of both sides of the House — for the government, for the opposition — for the people who are watching, for the public, and for the decorum of the House itself. When we attack democracy, as I've heard from a number of presenters, with the veiled view that this House is becoming a little phoney or stuff like that — I don't think we can take away from the democratic process solely because at

times we tend to let ourselves go and may deviate from the debate at hand. That should not be a reason for the government to change so drastically, in such a draconian manner, the rules that will affect the House and every member of this House in a very negative aspect.

Why is the government introducing their rules at this particular time? I think they have seen what happened in the past couple of years, and I must say I don't think they liked what happened in the past couple of years in this House. They have seen a well-organized, very active, very alert opposition that stood up to the government, to the Premier, to the various ministers when they introduced legislation that was not in the best interests of the people of Ontario. This was contrary to the views and the agenda the government wanted to proceed with. They found out that the attention of the opposition was curtailing the agenda of the government. We had good reason to do that, but of course the government didn't appreciate that we interfered with and curtailed the actions of the government.

When you have the Premier who starts the engine and you have one of the ministers pressing the pedal, God knows where they will end up. Unless you have somebody to watch over them, they may end up in one of the ditches on the new highway or stuff like that, and of course you know what happens.

What they want to accomplish with the new rules is, so-called, two for one. They want to accomplish what they should be doing in four days in two days. It's like saying to my friend the Minister of Transportation, "Remove all the stop signs, remove all the yield signs, remove whatever hindrance you have on the new 407, and you will be going from end to end in half the time." Of course. It's like saying, "Let's disband the opposition, let's eliminate their voice," which is not our voice but the people's out there, "and we can run through whatever we want in half the time." We don't think that's fair. That's why we are here.

Our system of government allows for an opposition. As the member for Brampton South was saying, "It is our duty, it is our right, it is our privilege, it is our obligation and responsibility to be in the House and speak on matters that we feel are important to us and to the people out there." Of course it is, but so is the role of the opposition. Once you take that away from us — Mr Speaker, I see you counting the members. I don't mind if we are short. It really doesn't bother me. I think we can carry on; that's fine. At this time we have no difficulties.

The opposition has a definite role to play in the House. When we want to silence the opposition, it means we want to silence the people out there, those who do not agree with the actions or the views of the government. Through us, they want to be heard in this House. When you have a government that just refuses to listen to the concern of the majority of constituents out there, then who do you have to represent those people? You have the opposition. Therefore, I'm saying to the government, don't change the rules to curtail so much that you deprive us, you deprive the people out there from being heard.

I don't mind that members of the opposition — especially those who, because of time and time allocation, don't get a chance to get up and speak as often and as



long as they would like to, and I wish they could. I really wish they could, because I think that not only would they like to as members of the House; I think they owe it to the people who elected them to stand up in this House and ask questions of the various ministers, do the routine petitions and statements, stuff like that. I think they have a sacrosanct right to get up in the House and address their own constituents that have elected them.

2050

We have seen tonight on a couple of occasions that it is a myth as to why they want to change the rules of this House. It is not that anyone is abusing the system or the rules or that we have become so arrogant with the rules that we don't pay attention any more. We have seen tonight on a couple of occasions where members of the government side have taken their full hour or their full 30 minutes, their full time allocated to each speaker.

There is an example that if they wanted to get more speakers, they could have split, as we do on many, many occasions, that particular time and allowed some of the members who don't have that opportunity to be heard to stand up and address their constituents, to address the Legislature here on issues that are important to them and are important to their constituents.

When you have a government that wants to become so draconian and shut up the opposition, I think what happens is that this will work contrary to their own wishes and desires, because what you do is you alienate not only the opposition members — welcome, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, you cannot silence the opposition totally. By doing that, what you do is you are going to attract more attention out there from the people who are being deprived of being heard through us in this House here.

This is not the way, to curtail the democratic process or curtail democracy itself. Certainly we cannot curtail either democracy or the democratic process to save — and I have to say that tongue-in-cheek — embarrassment for the Premier or the government at different times. The only time that the government gets embarrassed, and rightly so, is when they commit mistakes; it's when they propose legislation that is not in the best interests of the people. Therefore, we cannot suit the rules of the House to suit ourselves so we avoid embarrassment and at the time say, "Well, we're going to cut off these guys' time, especially question period, so they don't have to ask questions and embarrass the government." That is not the way that our system works. That is not the way on which we base the democratic process in our House.

I have to say that the government at times prides itself on saying, "You know, we have been working harder and longer than any other government." That's fine. I don't think we've heard any member in the House quarrelling with that. That's fine. We don't mind working, and working longer. So if it is a case of wanting to allow some of the members on both sides of the House, but especially members of the government, since there is a larger number if you will, and they should have the right to be heard, then why don't we find out a way to sit longer in the House as we have done in the past two weeks?

For the audience out there, this is live; it's not a repeat of yesterday or last week or last month. This is live and

it's now about 9 in the evening. If it takes an extra week a year, if you will, or a few more hours during particular days during a week so that we can allow more members to voice their concern on issues of interest to them, then why don't we do that? Why do we have to curtail the right of the opposition to speak on important matters, on issues that they feel are important to the people of Ontario and their own constituents?

As I was saying, I don't have an aversion myself to some of the rule changes that have been proposed by the government. Some of them are very innocuous, if you will, such as sharing the speaking time equally among members and stuff like that. That I have absolutely no problem with. Others are terribly, extremely destructive, disruptive, and do not add anything to the debates, the decorum or the quality of debate in this House or provide information to the people that have put us in here.

To give you an idea of some of the most important and negative aspects of the proposed legislation, I'll just mention a few; for example, to limit the legitimate debate. That is one of the cornerstones of our system, and if you eliminate the legitimate time for debate in the House, what else is left? Somewhere buried in the 37 or 47 proposed changes there are some minor changes, very minor and technical, which do not affect either members or the quality or the effectiveness of the debate. Those I don't think create a problem. What we have been saying to the government is that those that are mostly negative, that limit, curtail, our ability to work in this House, we resent. I think you will find that we will continue to be opposing them.

Diminish the ability of the opposition during question period: Well, that is the most important time in this House here. It is when we, as members of the government itself, as members of the opposition, get a chance to question the Premier, to question the ministers on their to-date actions, how they conduct the affairs of the government, the affairs of the people.

It is not the affairs of the government. I think sometimes we lose sight that this is not our government; it's the people's government. So it is up to us, it is incumbent upon each member of this House, that we use question period to question the various ministers and the Premier on the various issues as to why they do certain things. We may see it differently, but it is that time when the public pays attention, is made aware of our questioning of the government on issues to which we feel the government is not paying enough attention on behalf of the people of Ontario.

One other aspect of why I think it's very dangerous to proceed with the changes as they are proposing is that this is going to create a terribly lopsided balance of power, terribly, let alone that with a majority government, sooner or later you're going to get your way. We can filibuster, we can get a bit noisy, and I think getting noisy once in a while is healthy, I think is part of the process. I think that adds some flair, if you will. At times it may get a bit vociferous, but I think it adds some flair. But when you already have a majority and you come up with this type of draconian measure, you really leave no alternative, no possibility to the opposition to come up with any other substantial measure to confront an arro-



gance at times — and I'm not speaking of every member, I'm speaking of an arrogant government, and yes, we have a few — I think we have a right to do that. When you have a lopsided government, it is done not in the best interests of either the people or the democratic process which governs us.

2100

As I said, sure, at times we tend to get a bit phoney, if you will, with some of the things that are being done or said in the House, or perhaps it's our own posturing that we go through from time to time in the House, but it should not be done at the expense of the democratic system. If you don't have an opposition that keeps an eye on the actions of the government, then it means the government becomes very passive and the government is not kept in check from the opposition on behalf of the people.

Very often when we deal with the various committee levels, we question the ministers' assistants or other members of staff and we say, "We have our own set of amendments which we want to propose" on whatever may be under discussion. I'm trying to remember when any of the opposition amendments on whatever laws the government has proposed have been accepted by members of the government — almost never.

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** Bill 104.

**Mr Sergio:** I thank the minister for that interjection. Almost never. Even when members of the government side sit on a particular committee and say, "Yes, it makes sense; we like it," because they've got to follow the party line, they get voted down.

This reflects in these rules, because one of the changes proposed by the government — I don't know if it was the idea of the member for Nepean or if it was from the office of Mr Harris or whatever, but the fact is we are now facing a debate on the proposed changes. One of the rules — let alone that they don't accept amendments as proposed by the opposition, they don't want to even debate them any more — is they want to give the right and the power to the Chairs of the various committees to throw away the amendments that may be proposed from some of the government side.

If that is the case, knowing the composition of the various committees, what is the purpose of sending particular bills to various committees when we know they always have the majority on any particular committee and they can vote down the opposition at any time? Are we then saying that we do it solely for the sake of doing it? I don't think so. We have to create that balance that we would lose if we were to adopt all these rules. Therefore, it is important that we do not lose sight of the role of the opposition, the right of the opposition. As the member for Brampton South said, we have a duty, we have a right, we have an obligation and we have the responsibility as well.

If you didn't have an opposition that from time to time confronted the government and spoke on behalf of the people who are affected, who, then, would bring to the attention of those affected the consequences of the actions that the government may bring about as a consequence of a negative bill?

I don't have to go too far to just remind you that two or three weeks ago, for example, if it wasn't for the opposition, who have been pounding on the government that what you did to the seniors community in Ontario was wrong, charging \$100 for copayments, user fees for one year and then giving the seniors only eight and a half months of benefit, they would have got away with it. It wasn't right, but if it wasn't for us — we said to the government: "Look, guys, this is not fair. You're picking on the most vulnerable in our society and it's not fair that you're taking away \$30 million in copayments, in user fees, in prescription fees from the most needy in our society."

We had questions a number of times in the House and the minister responsible kept on saying: "No, no, no, it's not like that. It's a question of accounting procedure. It's when the year ends and when the year begins." Hold on a second, here. We have this which the government put out for everybody that says you pay \$100 for 12 months, and now we have seniors saying, "How come I'm being asked to pay \$100 again only eight and a half months after the program went into action?" If it wasn't for us, the government would have continued to charge seniors and others the \$2 copayment and the \$100 payment prior to the determined time, and I don't think that's fair.

There are many other areas, but this is one example where an active and attentive opposition must be a guardian of the people out there, must keep an eye on the government and say, "You're wrong." It's not posturing; it is not being phoney or silly. It is telling the government that what you're doing is wrong. It's up to us to use whatever method is available to us and make the government understand that indeed what it did or was doing was wrong. So I'm quite pleased that the government came to its senses and said, "Yes, it is wrong," and changed it.

The question remains that if we were to be shut off completely and not able to pursue in those allotted times that we have now for the opposition to tell the government to change its course because the way it is going, it is affecting very adversely a number of people — I think we'd like to have that time.

I don't have to tell you, for example, another very important aspect — and it still is not over. We are dealing with Bill 99, for example. I have to say, with all due respect, the government is not interested in letting the people know everything that is included in some of the bills they keep proposing. I would like to know how many of the injured workers know that no longer — and this is still under debate — would they be entitled to benefits for mental stress — it's called "mental stress" now, as it is in subsection 12(3) of Bill 99. Only within this section it is made clear that a worker is not entitled to benefits under the insurance plan for mental stress unless the mental stress is "an acute reaction to a sudden and unexpected traumatic event arising in the course of his or her employment."

The only time that is recognized is if that happens right in the place of employment. But if you are a strong employee or maybe the shock wasn't so hard and you managed to get out of the plant or the office and walk to the parking lot and you fall down, that's it, you've had it; it didn't happen in the place of employment. I'm asking



you if that is right. That is totally wrong, and we have been telling the government that it's wrong. Whether they will listen is something else, but it's our duty, our responsibility as members of the opposition, to point out to the government what is wrong with some of the contents of some of the legislation they are proposing.

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I think this is a real offence, an attack on injured workers, especially when they say, in connection with this to the workplace, that it must be established that the stress must be sudden, shocking and life-threatening. My God, do you want to see somebody coming out really dead of an injury in a workplace? It's got to be sudden, it's got to be shocking and it's got to be life-threatening. How bad must it be? If that is not recognized in the place of employment under these conditions here, how bad must it be? I think the person must be dead in order to be recognized. So there is a need and there is a place for an efficient and healthy opposition, and the government must listen to that, listen to the opposition.

As I have said before, I hope the rules will be changed to accommodate all members of this House so they can get up and speak up and be seen by their constituents on matters that are important to them. I think it would be nice to see some members of the government, especially the backbenchers, get up and confront the actions of the government sometimes like some members do. Mind you, the government knows what to do to put them in place. I think it would be very nice to see some backbenchers criticize the actions of their own government. We know there is plenty of criticism, but it would be nice to see them up there criticizing their own government openly, live, so their constituents can see that.

Unfortunately, I have only a few seconds left. I had prepared myself for a longer time, but what can I say? So be it. That's again the democratic process, and I would say I have made my point in the time that was allotted to me. I do not want to indulge myself in seeking more time, because I think it's reasonable enough and I don't think we should go for any changes in the rules.

I just want to say this: You cannot save embarrassment at the expense of democracy. Democracy and the democratic process cannot be curtailed at the expense of our people.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I appreciate the opportunity to join in the debate. The first thing I'd like to do is comment on and respond to some of the remarks of the government House leader. I was in the House as he commented when he first called the order of the day and outlined some of the reasons that the government was doing what it is now doing. Of course, let's understand that the actual motion we're debating now is to shut off debate on the rule changes that will limit and in large part muzzle the opposition in their ability to debate in the first place. It almost becomes a spy versus spy versus spy routine, but that is the motion that is on the floor now and that's what we're debating.

The government House leader opened his remarks using the government's mantra on this issue, which is, as we have heard over and over again from government backbenchers, "This is all about involving more members in debate." That was his quote.

*Applause.*

**Mr Christopherson:** I see the member who supposedly wrote all these applauding first. He must have been at least allowed in the meeting where they talked about the spin-doctoring if he wasn't in the meeting where they originated all the ideas that are in this document, because nobody is fooled by what's going on.

I'm surprised that the honourable member for Nepean would allow himself to be drawn into this, thinking that somehow this was going to work and the people wouldn't see through it. He could support it and lead the charge, but not many of us believe that he actually sat down and authored these and penned every one of them and they were his ideas alone and it was just coincidental that later in the day, after he held a news conference, the government House leader waded in saying: "What wonderful ideas they are. They should be the original opening for more discussion." Of course, we know there hasn't been any real discussion.

Let's move on in terms of why the government is really doing this and what the people think about it. Nobody buys into your argument that this is about opening up democracy and nobody buys the argument that this is about involving more members in debate. I'd like to read part of an editorial from the St Catharines Standard dated June 21. It's headed up "Contempt for Democracy," and one of the paragraphs reads:

"The government was obviously counting on the public at large to take little notice, viewing this baffling matter" — meaning rule changes — "as some dull bureaucratic shuffle that had something to do with who gets to ask questions in the Legislature and in what order. But this week, when the mice had been caught up in their game and it became obvious that public attention was inevitable, government House leader Dave Johnson quickly said he could meet with opposition parties to try and reach some sort of compromise. Why didn't the government take this approach before tabling the changes? Credibility doesn't seem to matter."

The Hamilton Spectator headline from yesterday is, "Rule Clampdown is Tory Overkill." These are folks who support you more times than not.

"The provincial government does not have a case for proposed procedural changes that would allow it to pass twice the amount of legislation it can under current rules. Democratic debate is the lifeblood of the Legislature. Even though question period in provincial legislatures, as well as the House of Commons, has become a bombastic circus, governments should resist the urge to stifle debate and criticism."

That is just a sampling of the opinions that are out there, and I think it's almost insulting to the people who support you that you continue to put such a feeble argument forward in an attempt to cover up what is blatantly a move to stifle the opposition and to ram legislation through at an even quicker pace than you already have. The evidence is there. This is not something new.

We saw it with Bill 7, when you brought in a brand-new Ontario Labour Relations Act — not a couple of amendments; a brand-new act — and how much public input did this government allow on a completely brand-



new Ontario Labour Relations Act, an act that went way beyond the Common Sense Revolution, way beyond things that you talked about in the campaign? You attacked rights that workers had that you did not speak about in the campaign. That piece of legislation was rammed through this House in one month; in fact second and third reading were the same day. The 640-page compendium that goes with the bill, the document that allows those of us who aren't lawyers to understand in plain language — done by bureaucrats, not partisans — what the bill is about and what the changes mean, was given to us five minutes before the debate began, a mere few hours before you made it law. And how much public input was there on Bill 7? Nothing, not one minute of public debate on Bill 7.

What happened after that? Then they really got full of themselves, because shortly after that, in fact less than two months, just before Christmas, they introduced the infamous Bill 26, the omnibus bully bill, the bill that removed so much discussion from this place because, rather than requiring a law change, Bill 26 contained massive amounts of deferring decision-making from this place, in terms of having to make a law, because, as people who are watching know, when you want to change a law, it has to go through this Legislature. When that happens we have the cameras, we have the public, we have the media, and people can decide for themselves what is going on and how they feel about it.

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Bill 26 did so many things, but one of the big things it did, and it was a thread through all the different pieces of legislation that were affected by Bill 26, was take the power away from this Legislature, therefore away from the public, and put it in regulations. As we all know, regulations aren't debated in public; regulations are passed in the cabinet room. Cabinet rooms, cabinet meetings, are not open to anyone other than cabinet ministers and the specific staff they allow to be there. I'm not faulting that; I was a part of that system. I've sat in that room and passed regulations myself. That is not my point. My point is that you transferred power away from the public eye back into that cabinet room that before Bill 26 properly belonged in here. That's part of what Bill 26 was about.

We also know that Bill 26 was the creation of the Health Services Restructuring Commission, which right now is in my community eyeballing at least one, maybe two of our hospitals; the same commission, by the way, that the Minister of Municipal Affairs just finished writing a letter to, and the Solicitor General wrote to it and the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. The Minister of Municipal Affairs was found by the Integrity Commissioner to have flagrantly abused his rights as a minister.

What's interesting about that is that it was the Minister of Health — who sits just diagonally; he could reach out and touch the Minister of Health — who not long ago in this House talked about the fact that the Health Services Restructuring Commission was an arm's-length body and he couldn't have anything to do with it, none of his government could have anything to do with it, because it was this arm's-length body. Now we watched yesterday the Premier stand up and say, "Oh, it's news to us that it's a

quasi-judicial body; it's news to us that it's inappropriate for a minister to contact this commission in any way."

There's a reason you can't do that. Ministers of the crown have incredible influence. When you receive a letter of any sort or a phone call or any contact from a minister's office, it gets attention, it wakes people up, it carries messages, it has influence even if it isn't meant to, which is why, I might point out, the Integrity Commissioner urges — Minister, they must be urging you. I used to get the letters all the time. Being the cautious kind of politician I try to be, I availed myself of his offices many times, asking: "This is what I'm about to do," or "This is what I'm thinking of doing," or "Here's the situation, where I feel I should respond. How far can I go? Can I do this?" It's easier to ask ahead of time than it is to stand up and explain why you violated and potentially abused the office of a minister of the crown.

It's hard to believe that those three cabinet ministers wouldn't have known that they shouldn't contact the commission. But it's even more incredible, if you accept the workload that ministers have and how quickly things fly by — I can appreciate that — it's even more difficult to believe that someone on that minister's staff didn't make sure there was a contact with the Integrity Commissioner to make sure their minister wasn't doing exactly what they did, which was cross the line.

That Health Services Restructuring Commission was a part of Bill 26. We talk about how sneaky it was that they brought in the rule changes; it was just as sneaky with Bill 26. It was in the dying days of the session in the week or two, a few weeks anyway, before Christmas, when everybody was starting to look elsewhere and thinking about the holidays and making their plans, even members of this place. We all do our job, like any citizen, but as that season approaches, our minds turn to those things. You brought in that omnibus bill, which contained so much change, change that I would argue is not good for Ontario, but you cannot argue objectively that it wasn't a massive amount of change and you tried to ram it through in a blink.

It was so detested by us that we took the most extraordinary action I've even seen since I've been here on either side of the House, and that was to literally, and I admit it, hijack the place, because you left us no choice, because you abused your majority in a way that no one ever had before. No one argues with your right to govern. You've got a majority and you have a right to use it. But you do not have a right to trample over the rights of the minority and you do not have a right to trample over the rights of the public. That's an abuse of your power.

What we did was to make sure that there was some means to slow you down. The public knows that once we got out into the communities and started holding hearings, there were hundreds of submissions that said, "You have to slow down." Many of your own supporters said: "You've got to slow down. This is too big; we can't comprehend it." I can remember talking to people over the holiday season saying, "I'm just overwhelmed," and these were experts in the field in one particular area of Bill 26. You were in dozens of different areas. It was deliberate. It was a deliberate attempt to overwhelm the agenda, to ram it through when the public wasn't looking,



hoping you still had enough of the shine from the honeymoon that you could withstand the criticism and ram it through.

We stopped you to some degree and forced you out into the public and at least gave people a chance to understand what was in it to some degree. But you still didn't listen to those who said that you need to take more time. It was a cross between being sad and a joke to watch the hundreds of amendments you had to make to that bill, because once we got out into the public, all these mistakes came out. That, in and of itself, is not a significant matter. It's not unusual for bills to be improved when they're out in public. In fact, in large part that's why you do it. We in this place, it's an understatement to say it, don't have all the answers. Once the public finally had an opportunity to get at this monstrous bully bill, you had to make massive amounts of changes because you'd moved so quickly.

Does that end the example? No. Bill 49, changes to the Employment Standards Act, was a bill about which the Minister of Labour said to Ontario labour leaders the week before you introduced it: "Oh, by the way, we're going to introduce this minor bill next week. It's just a few housekeeping matters, nuts and bolts, nothing to get too worried about."

Ministers of the crown are given great leeway in terms of the respect they're afforded. If a minister was saying that point-blank, why would anyone question it? What a coincidence. You guys are so full of coincidences. The next coincidence was that those same labour leaders were off to a national labour convention at the other side of the country. You dropped Bill 49 on the floor of this Legislature, we took a look at this thing and all hell broke loose. It wasn't minor housekeeping. There were major takeaways in that bill, rights that workers have had for decades. That's what was in Bill 49. You tried to ram it through and say: "There's no need for public hearings. It's only a minor bill, minor housekeeping."

We called you on it and started to bring to light the implications of Bill 49 and your takeaways in employment standards, which, by the way, particularly for those workers who don't have the benefit of a union, is your bill of rights. This says how many hours of work, how much vacation you're entitled to; this is the floor of your rights. When we brought to light how many of those rights were being taken away, this government went from saying, "It's only a minor housekeeping bill and therefore doesn't require any public hearings," to four weeks of province-wide public hearings, not because they suddenly had a massive injection of democracy but because they were caught out, the same as the editorial from the *St Catharines Standard* pointed out on this issue. You didn't start negotiating or offer to negotiate until you were caught out.

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It goes on: Bill 99, WCB. We had promises from Minister Jackson and Minister Witmer: "Don't worry. The opposition is making all this noise about province-wide public hearings. We're going to do that. Why do the opposition members keep getting up and making all these requests? Of course we're going to do that." What did we get? Four half-days in Toronto, six measly days across the province, for a bill that completely replaces the

Workers' Compensation Act, for a bill that takes \$15 billion away from injured workers and gives \$6 billion of it to your corporate pals, that takes away 50% of the money that's set aside for pensions for injured workers.

It's interesting. Your idea of fairness is, take away 5% from injured workers, because now they're only going to get 85% of net instead of 90%, and lower the premiums that the employers pay into the fund. That's fair. Each of them is 5%. Some of your arguments are that simplistic. But the fact of the matter is that the unfunded liability of the WCB is not taxpayer money, not one penny, and they've never borrowed a dime. That's money employers owe because their employees can't sue them under the law. If you're hurt at work and it's your employer's fault, you can't sue them. You're entitled to your wages and benefits. That was the tradeoff in 1914. You've given those who owe that unfunded liability a 5% reduction in the money they pay. At the same time you've reduced the amount of take-home pay of a worker injured on the job through no fault of their own.

That bill, after your Minister of Labour promised province-wide public hearings, got six days. In fact, in order to get to as many communities as we could, we even split at least one of the days — I'm not sure if there were two — so we're only going to be in that community a half-day. Yet this is a government that stands up on every piece of legislation and says: "We're doing this for democracy. We're doing this for the people. We're taking care of people in a way you never did." That's sure true.

What are some of the other things the government House leader said? He thought that 90 minutes for opening debate, leadoff debates, which means either the leader of the party, in my case Howard Hampton, or from the Liberals, or it could be the government or the critic, or the minister can have up to 90 minutes, was too much time. Isn't it funny that when they were in the third party over here the 90 minutes that we had moved to from unlimited wasn't enough. Isn't that interesting. It wasn't enough over here; too much over there.

What phrase did he use? He used an interesting phrase. He said, "We can't let these people dominate the time." That one really left me perplexed: "dominate the time." He makes it sound like somehow we've got leaders and critics and ministers pushing everybody out of the way, maybe using a baseball bat to threaten them, saying, "I'm going to use all this time and you just get out of my way."

When my leader stands up and leads off our debate for 90 minutes, I want that to happen. I'm proud of my leader and I'm proud of the position he takes and I'm proud when he speaks on behalf of my party. He's not dominating anything. He's being given an opportunity, a decent amount of time to expand on some ideas so we can do what we're supposed to do in here, which is have thoughtful debate. Yes, we have theatrics and, yes, we all tend to get a little louder than others from time to time, but the longer the time to speak, there is the argument, the more time you have to get into the nuances and details and implications of what are sometimes very complex pieces of legislation.

Again, it looks contrived. It looks like a contrived argument from where I sit. I would also argue, since we all don't want that to change, that if you think we're



being so hard done by by our party leaders or our critics, just add another day. But you don't justify this argument by reducing that time from 90 to 40.

A couple of other things. The government House leader says, "Other jurisdictions can do it," meaning this time limit and some of the other changes they're making, but what he doesn't tell you is that they've cherry-picked. They took a little bit from this Legislature, a little bit from the House of Commons, a little bit over here, and sort of patched it all together so that we have the most restrictive rights in the entire nation, and then they justify it by saying, "All the other jurisdictions can do it." It doesn't wash when you look at it.

For instance, some of the times that are less are in provinces that have fewer members because the Legislature's not as big. Some of the time limits the government talks about in the House of Commons, try factoring in the fact that they've got two Houses. They've got a Senate and the House of Commons. Bills have to go through a much longer process. No matter how hard a Prime Minister tries, with how big a majority, there's a certain amount of time restriction that will make those cases seem like forever compared to what we're going to have here in Ontario.

I would say to him, if he likes all those other rules so much, how about bringing in some total packages for us to look at? If you like what they do in a certain province so much, let's look at all the things they do. You like what they do in the House of Commons? Let's look at all the things they do. But don't cherry-pick from the different places, patch it all together and then say: "Everybody else can do it. Why can't you?" That's not the reality.

Then the minister said: "Listen, there are things in there that may seem a little harsh, but we don't intend to do it. We wouldn't really use those rules. We just want to put them there." We heard that in Bill 26, and slowly but surely all those draconian measures, one at a time, are being used. You've got your excuse for it at the time, but it does put the lie to the argument you gave at the time that, "Oh, we would never do that," because you are doing it. Nobody puts rules in place when you're in power that you don't imagine at some point you might want to use. Please don't insult us with that kind of argument.

Then the minister said he wants to negotiate. Again, let's remember that all of that came out after the media started to pay much closer attention, when they began to realize they were going to be carved out of the process in a significant way, and if they're out, that means the public's out. Once the light was on them and the truth started to come up, bubble to the surface, suddenly the minister wants to negotiate. He even said he's ready to have more negotiations later on, but we know all they're doing is watching the clock. It's 9:35 now. They know at midnight they're out of this place and they're in their favourite mode; that is, when nobody's watching. They like that best. The prospect of any real negotiation is all but non-existent. It's smoke and mirrors, and people are seeing it for that.

In the few minutes that I have left I want to just touch on a couple of the comments that the member for Nepean made. I caught some of his debate when I was in one of the rooms.

He talked about the number of bills that were passed. I have a colleague of mine who later on has stats to argue that. I want to argue it from the point of view that one of the reasons you may not have passed as many bills is that you're very big on passing omnibus bills, whole new pieces of legislation, rather than the individual bills that other governments have traditionally brought in over the decades, so there was a lot more debate on individual bills and there were more bills. But the effect of the change that is being made is that you're the winner, hands down. That omnibus Bill 26 was the most comprehensive bill ever to be introduced in the history of Ontario, the one you tried to ram through just before Christmas.

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On top of that, as I mentioned earlier, a lot of the debates that used to happen here through law changes don't require bills any more; they're done by regulation in the cabinet room. You've designed a world that gives you the outcome you want: fewer bills; pass them more quickly; less controversy; less opportunity for scrutiny; less opportunity for opposition members to speak.

I want to mention in the final moments that if you really were interested in the public, the bill that you already had agreement from us on in terms of time lines, one where we did have an agreement, one that does matter to the public, one that will make a difference, that we all support, the road safety bill — you didn't call that bill today. That's not what we're dealing with here on the last day of this session. What we're dealing with is a motion that shuts down debate on the rules that are shutting down debate.

That's what you decided was the priority. But it's your priority, not the public's. It's always your priority that matters, not the public. Whatever is in your best interests, everyone else has to live with. The fact of the matter is that I have no doubt that this government will go down in history as the most anti-democratic, anti-citizen, anti-public-interest government that we've ever seen. I have to go back and read about what some of the governments were doing during the Depression to find anything close to what you're doing at every level that you're at.

You seem to think that you've got enough time between now and the election that people are going to forget. They aren't going to forget. We're not going to let them forget. They will know from the change in their lives and the change in their communities that you hurt people, and now what you want is the ability to do it with fewer people looking on, less analysis, less debate, in the hope that people won't catch on that you're the cause of a lot of what the future ills are going to be in this province.

**Mr Parker:** Anyone just checking in on this debate might be forgiven for thinking that what we are debating here today is another one of those ruthless, notorious initiatives by the government to make the planet stop rotating on its axis and to cause water to run uphill. I would also suggest that someone might be forgiven for thinking that the rules that we are talking about here today are rules that are written in stone and have been passed down to us from the ages and that there is somehow some nefarious plot to overturn all of this.



So I thought maybe what I would do is take the time available to me and try to bring some perspective to bear on the discussion we're having here this evening and maybe give some focus to the debate that we are engaged in. We're here debating a motion for time allocation on a motion to make certain amendments to the rules that govern our processes here in this chamber. A little bit of history might be useful in helping to give some perspective to what we are engaged in here today, or what I thought we were engaged in and what the order paper says we are engaged in, although not everyone who has spoken here today seems to have read the same order paper that I have on my desk.

To give it some perspective, let's just go back a few years and remind ourselves that the standing orders in this House are a creature of this House. The standing orders change from time to time at the wish of the members of this House. In 1989, for example, the Liberal government of the day brought in certain changes to the standing orders as they then existed.

**Mr Baird:** Who was the House leader then?

**Mr Parker:** Who was the House leader at that time? I think it was the member for Renfrew North, an eminently respected member of this chamber who wouldn't ever do anything contrary to the interests of parliamentary procedure. But at that time, a motion was brought forward and was voted into effect by the Liberal government of the day which included among its provisions imposing a time limit on the period for petitions in routine proceedings. A time limit was imposed in 1989 by the Liberal government of that day.

In 1991, there were certain amendments that were brought forward by the NDP government of that day. Those amendments included a provision to extend the hours of the House when required. I wonder if that suggestion sounds familiar.

**Mr Baird:** That's where I got the idea.

**Mr Parker:** My friend from Nepean tells me that's where he got the idea for the amendment that he brought forward before this House here this month. That was a suggestion that was brought forward by the NDP government in 1991. Included in the 1991 package was a suggestion that there be a requirement to move the orders of the day at 4 pm, regardless of the state of the proceedings during the day. That may sound familiar to members of this chamber also. That's where my friend from Nepean got the idea for that particular initiative. The 1991 package included a 30-minute speaking limit. That particular package was not pursued.

But in 1992 another package was pursued and was acted on. In 1992, the NDP government of that day shortened the parliamentary calendar by two weeks. We've heard a lot here tonight about the importance of debate, the importance of not stifling debate and the importance of the processes of this House. So important were the processes of this House to the government in 1992 that it voted to shorten the parliamentary calendar by two weeks. The arguments from the other side about the importance of debate in this House begin to ring a little hollow with me when I'm reminded of that.

The package in 1992 also included a limit to the opening speeches to 90 minutes. Prior to that time, there were no limits on speaking time in this House, but a limit

was imposed. Someone thought it was wise to impose time limits on speeches in 1992.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** Who was that?

**Mr Parker:** That was the NDP government at that time. They thought it made sense to impose time limits on speaking time in this House. The guardians of the democratic process and the guardians of the rights of the members of this House to speak on matters before this House and to represent their constituents imposed time limits. The time limit on the initial speaker was 90 minutes and subsequent speakers 30 minutes.

The 1992 package brought forward by the NDP government of the day also included a formal provision for allocation of time on a stage of a bill, time allocation on a bill. Again, another means of limiting debate in this House, putting time limits, putting some constraints, putting some discipline on debate in this House. That was the NDP government on that day. My friend from Niagara Falls asks the question; I'm constrained to give him the answer.

In June of this year, my colleague from Nepean suggested another set of rule changes before this House. His proposals included 32 proposed amendments to the standing orders. They were designed further to improve the rules governing the proceedings of the Legislature so that the House could be more productive, more effective and more respectful of individual members. I will get into some of the specifics a bit later.

Just in general terms, the proposals included a guaranteed amount of time for debate on the budget, a requirement that the budget be voted on and a provision to make it easier for the Legislature to work longer hours when necessary. Again, does that sound familiar? Is that an idea that originated with my friend from Nepean? No. That was an idea that was brought forward by the previous government. They chose not to act on it at that time. It was a good idea then and I suggest that it's a good idea now.

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My friend from Nepean brought forward a proposal to ensure that funding for social programs and other vital government operations is not interrupted by what goes on in this House. I'll just take a moment to remind the members present that periodically it is necessary to vote through a supply motion in this House. There have been times when supply motions have been held up because of the proceedings in this House, and people don't get their cheques and people aren't paid for the work they do. People out there in this province who require and rely on support from the government are held hostage while this House gets through whatever roadblock is in the way, caused by whatever gamesmanship is going on in this House until that has worked its way through. Those people who are relying on support from this government, those people who have put in their honest day's work and are waiting to get paid have to wait until that process has been completed. The proposals brought forward by my friend from Nepean address that difficulty.

Included also are measures to ensure that the legitimate business of the House is not impeded by MPPs who break rules or by frivolous procedural delays and stalling tactics. I think that's in the interests of the people of the province, that whatever goes on in this House, the



business of this House can proceed so the needs of the people can be addressed. If a member of this House wants to pull some sort of antic, wants to demonstrate disapproval of one nature or another by means of breaking the rules of this House, the business of the House need not be interrupted while that member carries on.

Many of the amendments proposed by Mr Baird would bring the rules of this House into conformity with the rules that apply in the House of Commons in Ottawa.

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** So the Liberals here could agree with them.

**Mr Parker:** We would expect that the Liberals here would look with favour upon those particular recommendations. Some of them have been gracious enough to express their favour with some of the recommendations that have been brought forward; not all of them but some of them.

On June 12 of this year, just a few weeks ago, the government House leader tabled a motion which was based largely on the proposals brought forward by my colleague from Nepean, but his proposals also included the recommendations of other members of this House. A consultation period had taken place, recommendations had been brought forward and those recommendations had been included in the proposals the government formally tabled in the motion before this House.

Specifically, there were certain recommendations from the member for Elgin, the only independent member of this House. Those recommendations were aimed at improving the effectiveness of independent members of this House and those recommendations were adopted by the government and put forward in the motion the government tabled.

Maybe this is a moment where I can specify in detail just what the recommendations are that we are ostensibly debating here today. They fall into four broad categories.

The first category I might classify as amendments that are designed to protect and enhance the democratic rights of MPPs themselves. These amendments would guarantee that each MPP had the right to bring their private member's bill or resolution to a vote. It might not be immediately apparent to everyone listening to this debate that that would be an issue, but at present the rules of this House enable members of this House to prevent a private member's bill from coming forward to a vote. We think that's wrong. We think that's unfair. We think that is not in the interests of the people in this province. We think matters that are properly brought before this House should be entitled to be brought forward to a vote in this House and that vote should not be impeded by the actions of a minority of the members of the House through some procedural mechanism. That procedural mechanism exists at present to interfere with the ability of a private member's bill to be brought for a vote. The proposals before us today would remove that procedural impediment and would guarantee that every private member's bill brought forward would be able to be carried through to a vote.

The proposals the government has brought forward would give each MPP a right to abstain from voting. Right now, each member in this House is required to participate in every vote that takes place. If the member is in this chamber at the time the vote takes place, the

member is required to vote yes or no on the issue. There are times when a member may wish to demonstrate an abstention on a particular vote. That option is not available at present. I see no reason why that option should not be available to members of this House. The proposals brought forward by the government would give members that option.

The proposals brought forward by the government would add a purpose clause to the rules. The reason for having a purpose clause would be to give a context to all the rules in the book, to ensure that the standing orders are interpreted and applied in a manner that respects the rights of MPPs. A purpose clause gives a context to all that follows it so that in matters of interpretation it is clear what purpose is to be achieved by the rule under interpretation. In the absence of a purpose clause, that guiding principle is absent and it is not clear to anyone attempting to interpret a rule in a particular set of circumstances how that rule should be applied.

Putting in a purpose clause right at the top puts everything into context so that when an issue arises, when a concern arises, when an ambiguity arises in the light of the particular circumstances of a particular situation, the purpose clause can serve as a guide as to how the rule is to be interpreted and applied. I think that makes sense. I think that's helpful to all of us. I think it's helpful to the process. That's one of the recommendations included in the package that's before us tonight.

One of the provisions in the government's package is a provision designed to protect MPPs by clarifying that a member who contravenes House rules cannot prevent other members from continuing to represent their constituents. I've commented on this already. At present, an individual member so inclined, if that member breaches the rules of this House and acts in violation of the rules in this House, has the potential of bringing the proceedings of the House to a total standstill. The purpose of the rules is to serve as a code of conduct for all of us, a code to which we all adhere, to which we all agree and by which we are all bound. The thought that by rejecting that code, by rejecting those principles, an individual member can bring the proceedings of the House to a halt is in direct contravention of everything we should all be committed to in this House, which is to conform to the rules we set for ourselves and to enable the business of the House to proceed.

Certainly individuals will have differing points of view on different issues and those differing points of view should be debated — this is the place for debate — but when the time comes for a decision, that decision should be capable of being made. It is hardly appropriate at all that an individual member can prevent that decision from being made or prevent the business of the House from going forward by the simple act of breaking the rule. But that's the situation we find ourselves in now.

I see that as a gap in our current rules and I see that as a gap that should be plugged. The proposals before the House now plug that gap and will enable the business of the House to proceed in the interests of the members of the House who obey the rules and in the interests of the people of this province, so that one member who decides to be obstreperous, who decides to be obstructionist,



cannot hold up the business of all the other members who are here performing their duties for their constituents in good faith.

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There are other provisions that fall into that category, but let me move on to the next category, which, I will suggest, is those amendments designed to make the assembly more efficient and more productive. These are the provisions that would encourage greater debating opportunity in the Legislature, that would make it easier for MPPs to work late prior to recess so that more debating time could be made available to members, so that the evening is work time also.

We happen to be debating now in the evening. Anyone who's watching this on TV, you're watching this live; this is not a tape from earlier today. But this is available only in the last two weeks of a session. Members are here for such a short period of time, and many members travel to Queen's Park from points in remote areas of the province. When you're here, the debating time is limited to the afternoon of four days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; two hours on Thursday morning for private members' business, but otherwise, afternoons only on four days of the week. That's hardly enough time to get all the business of the province completed. There's no reason why time in the evening can't also be made available to members to get on with the public business. The proposals brought forward by the government would enable that to take place.

There is a provision in the package brought forward by the government to move from routine proceedings to orders of the day at 4 pm. This is a proposal that the NDP government thought was a good idea in 1992; we think it's still a good idea now and we are moving ahead with that recommendation.

It would also include a mechanism to ensure that funding for vital operations of the government is not interrupted, and I've commented on that already.

A third category of amendments in the government's package are those amendments designed to bring the rules of this House into line with those of the House of Commons in Ottawa. There are a number of such proposals. One of these proposals is a specified petition response time that would bring this House into compliance with the House of Commons, certain rules concerning routine proceedings, certain rules concerning order paper questions. Maybe I can just comment on that briefly.

At present — this might not be commonly known across the province — a member in this House is entitled to file questions not only during the oral question period each afternoon, but questions could also be filed with government ministries in written form. There is no limit to the number of questions that can be put forward. We have cases on record in this Parliament, during this session, of one member tabling 400 written questions in, what was it, a week? Was it 400 questions in a week?

I leave it to others to make their own inference as to whether 400 questions, all tabled at virtually the same time, were really intended and directed at any sort of useful procurement of information. Or might they have been tabled for some other purpose? How do we want our government's resources applied? Do we want our

government's resources applied answering 400 questions in a week, tabled by one member, or do we want the government's resources applied to getting on with the business of the people?

We think the people want the resources of their government applied to getting on with the business of the people. We think 400 questions in one week is not doing anybody any good. They don't think that in Ottawa either. There are rules in Ottawa to apply realistic limits to written order paper questions. We propose to bring the same sort of discipline, the same sort of focus, the same sort of rules here to Queen's Park.

There is also a proposal to bring this House into compliance with the House of Commons in Ottawa to allocate speaking time according to a more precise formula. The previous government imposed limits on speaking time. The previous government saw fit to put a limit on debate in this House, to limit the total minutes that could be consumed in debate before this House. The initial speaker would have 90 minutes, subsequent speakers 30 minutes, and at a certain point a time allocation motion could be brought forward and bring the whole thing to a close. Those rules were imposed by the previous government, by the NDP government, their rules, the rules they brought forward.

What we have seen in this House is that certain speakers are on their feet all the time and other members don't get up at all.

**Mr Gilchrist:** All Bradley, all the time.

**Mr Parker:** Some people who watch the legislative channel on TV might be forgiven, as my friend from Scarborough East suggests, for thinking that the Ontario parliamentary channel is in fact the all-Bradley channel: all Bradley, all the time.

The initial speaker on any bill is entitled to speak for 90 minutes. Anyone who has watched the debates in this House, anyone who has debated in this House, is well aware that well before the 90 minutes has expired, the thought that is applied to the bill in question has long since expired and the time begins to be padded out. It gets padded out with reminiscences. It gets padded out with personal comments. It gets padded out with a few advertisements for the folks back home, a few inside jokes, a few asides, a few debating points —

**Mr Gilchrist:** Book reports.

**Mr Parker:** Some book reports; we've had book reports in this House.

It's hard for people — well, it's hard for some people in this House — to fill 90 minutes of speaking time with 90 minutes of productive content. I'm not the first person to make this observation. My friend opposite from Cochrane South, when this very concept was being debated in 1992, made the point, "If you can't come to your point in 20 minutes you have a real problem." I think he had a good point in 1992, but we're not prepared to be quite that strict. The recommendation the government has brought forward in its package is that the initial speaker on any particular bill would have 40 minutes to speak to the bill. Subsequent speakers would have 20 minutes apiece, up to five hours. Once five hours of debate has taken place, speakers after that would have 10 minutes.



Does this limit debate? No, it does not limit debate. We are not talking about limiting debate with this amendment. I've heard the comments opposite suggest that's exactly what this is aimed at, what this is designed for, but no. It is not designed for limiting debate; it is designed for increasing debate, enhancing debate, improving debate. Instead of having 90 minutes of drivel on all subjects under the sun, because the speaker has run out of things to say on the bill and is beginning to grasp at straws, we would rotate more speakers on the matter. The first speaker would have a full 40 minutes to make all the points that need to be made in an opening speech, and then the baton is passed. The subsequent speakers would have 20 minutes each, perhaps bringing a different perspective, perhaps bringing the debate back to bear on the matter at hand, as I am trying to do here tonight after listening to many of my friends opposite meander off into areas far afield from the time allocation motion we are dealing with tonight on the rule changes being proposed.

By focusing on 20 minutes of debating time per speaker, the debate will focus more clearly on the issue before the House in each case. That is a recommendation that the House of Commons has adopted. They see the wisdom of such a rule. We propose to bring that provision here in this House. It gives more members an opportunity to participate in debate.

2210

I appreciate that Mr Bradley would have to share some of his air time with some of his colleagues. I expect his colleagues would appreciate that and Mr Bradley would have to find his air time somewhere else. I'm sure he's creative enough to find other opportunities. It would give an opportunity for other members of all caucuses to participate in the debate on all matters that are brought before this House.

Is total debate limited by this proposal? No, total debate is not limited by this proposal. This is not a proposal to limit the total amount of debate. It is a proposal to keep each speaker focused on the issues in question, on the matters to which they are speaking, and to give more members an opportunity to participate in that debate.

There is a fourth category of amendments brought forward by the government, and those fall into what I will call a technical category. I won't take the House's time tonight to dwell on those in detail, but to be honest, I haven't heard any particular objection to those recommendations. I think those are recommendations that there's pretty much agreement on in this House.

I'm going to bring my remarks to a close now, but I did want to take this opportunity to bring this entire discussion back down to earth and remind the member for Scarborough North what we're here to talk about so that when he gets up right after me, he will, unlike some others who have appeared before us, keep his remarks firmly focused on the substance of the matter that is before us tonight and perhaps address some of the issues that we're here to discuss tonight and enlighten us with some useful remarks that relate to the issues that arise directly out of the motion that is before all of us here at this moment.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Keep going.

**Mr Parker:** I'm encouraged to keep speaking. I don't want to disappoint my friends. I know they've enjoyed what I've had to say, and there's so much more that could be said, but I am sure others can bring another perspective to bear on this entire discussion and it's important that they have their opportunity to do so. So at this point, having said what I intended to say about summarizing what it is we're here to talk about, to help the member for Scarborough North keep focused on the matters that are genuinely at issue here tonight, I think the time has come for me to relinquish the rest of my time and allow the member from Scarborough to pick it up from here. Thank you all very much.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Let me sympathize with the member for York East first. He said that in this debate one of the main focuses is to limit members to 20 minutes. Somehow this member took his full 30 minutes just trying to be focused and he still hasn't focused. In his 30 minutes he said his party is going to dictate to us when we should speak, how we should speak, why we should speak. Then he himself, who was trying to discipline himself to speak for 20 minutes, spoke for 30 minutes and then said, "Listen, I better quit now because I have so much more to say." How contradictory. How ironic that in one breath your party is trying to dictate to all the opposition, plus many of your backbenchers who basically just follow orders, as has been said.

As some members in your party have said to me, "Why would they want to bring in a bill at this moment to change the rules, to upset more people when so many people are upset with us now?" It's the nature of the animal. It's the nature of the bully. It's the nature of the individuals who want to amass all this power unto themselves and to go further. Someone said to me also that in this democracy there are people who seep into the system, who got the mandate to govern, and now they think they have the mandate to rule. But there are people out there who will not allow this. As a matter of fact, there was someone called Hitler who got elected in the same way, in the democratic process, and got so much out of hand — you saw how out of hand he got — that millions of people died thereafter when he got power to his head and himself.

Again, they will tell me when to speak, how to speak and what to speak. In this arena itself, one speaks as one feels, with respect to all, and gets into a debate. I presume it's very difficult for the government side to listen to criticism. It is kind of difficult. I presume you have to have a certain amount of character in an individual to receive that criticism and take it in that way.

Let me again mention what this legislation is all about: It's to shut us down. It's to dictate to us. It's to bully us. One of your colleagues in the government stated that we are a bunch of obstructionists. They want to get their bills through and the nerve of the opposition to debate this when they want to get on with the job, get on to do what they have to do without any kind of democratic process.

I think I should remind the members here why I was elected and maybe why they were elected, lest they forget. I was elected by the people of Scarborough North in 1985 when there were about 220,000 people within



that constituency; about 120,000 of those could vote. Even though many did not vote for me, I felt a responsibility to come to the arena of this Parliament to present their views and to take my time in the best way I can to articulate their views and their concerns.

On arriving here in 1985, I did not find that much difficulty doing it in the time that was given to me. First, one has to get accustomed to this rather intimidating arena. I found many articulate, quite bright and very experienced politicians here and I learned a lot. I've seen many new members arrive in this place who try to familiarize themselves with the rules and regulations. Some take an hour, an hour and a half to get across their ideas, their many views and some of the neglected issues that had to be brought. It took more than half an hour, it took more than an hour, but patiently the government of the day, whoever they were during those times, listened carefully.

Then here arrived in 1995 a government that said, "We have a mandate to govern, to tell the people, because we are right in everything we do, and we will tell you how long you should speak." In the short time they have governed this province — trying to rule is what they are doing in this province — they have had more closures within that time than any other government I've seen. One closure is one closure too many, because that's what debate is all about. The fact is that each time they don't get their way, they bring their bully approach to things by shutting the debate down and limiting the time.

The ironic thing about it all is that they say they want to reduce the time so everyone can have an opportunity to speak, but the fact is sometimes, before I even get an opportunity to express my constituency concerns, they have brought in closure. The same government, the same party that is talking about giving an opportunity for all of us to speak has put closure on this. They have even put closure on this motion about rule changes, and that's what we're debating today, to shut this down, to hurry it along.

2220

I can't recall ever sitting for such a long time, one sitting that has been so long, trying to ram everything through, and still they feel they do not have enough time to do their mandate. They do; they have passed many bills. They are the government and they can do whatever they want, and they have done so, and we have seen that.

Many of my colleagues have spoken about some of the legislation that has been through this place that has taken on the tone, "We want it now, first reading, and in the next day or so we want second reading, and in the next day or so, third reading." When we decide that this will not be so, they get rather upset and put closure on these motions, on the bills they put forward.

The ultimate nerve of this government was at the time they were putting forward their budget. It is the ordinary courtesy of a government to do a briefing, to do a lockup. A lockup, for those who are watching this in the wee hours — I know many people are watching this at home right now because it's much more entertaining than Geraldo or even Law and Order. They are saying, "The nerve of these people who are saying they will ram things through."

We were sitting in a lockup for the budget, and then beyond that we were told that there was a bomb scare in the building and that we could not move. What this government had done in the meantime was it sneaked in behind those who were out, called the House to order, and tried to move a bill that was rather thick, a huge bill, one of the largest bills I have known that has been brought before this House: the famous Bill 26, the omnibus bill.

The time they were giving us to read that bill in order to vote on that bill was the minimum. As a matter of fact, it wasn't even in my hand and they wanted me and my colleagues to vote on it. Then when we refused and said that time should be allowed, the bully approach and tactics — and that's how they got their name. As a matter of fact, no one regarded them as such a bully until they decided this bill must go through: "We need the power to control this province. We need the power not to come back to the Legislature for any consent, for any process of changing any legislation. What we want to do is to put in this great omnibus bill," amassing the power to a few people who sit in the cabinet office, with instructions from what are called the whiz kids, who tell them what to do, how to jump, how high to jump, why to jump.

The pathetic part about all this is that many of the backbenchers there didn't even understand what was going on. They didn't even know what was happening. They just had to follow orders. So they arrived here to vote on this bill. Madam Speaker, I'm sure you were there the day they all stood in unison, like a choir, singing out of this hymn book. They had never seen the lines before, but how well they were tuned, saying yes, yes, yes.

I and my colleagues decided, "Listen, we are not able to vote on this; you're ramming this thing through; you're asking for motions and you're asking for passage of a bill without any public hearing," just before Christmas when they felt everyone would be more concerned about other things than legislation. They were trying to pass this as fast as possible, but many of us in the opposition — all of us in the opposition — said: "This is more important than even Christmas. This is about how we govern people and we have to understand these laws. We are making sure this bully government doesn't ram things through." So we all refused to leave.

Today and yesterday, on a couple of days when we debate this, I'm hearing many times about the "Alvin Curling fiasco."

**Mr Baird:** That has nothing to do with Bill 26.

**Mr Curling:** It's rather interesting that they would then regard my action — that they would need to change the rules of this Parliament because of the action that was taken by me and my colleagues here.

Of course they say, "This has nothing to do with Bill 26." It has all to do with Bill 26. You know why they say that? Let me explain that. They hadn't read it, so it had nothing to do with Bill 26. They didn't know what was in it. Had I read it at that time? No. They did not give us any time to read it. How can I vote on something I don't know? But in a glance at the bill I see where they're going to amass this power to themselves, where they are not going to entertain any debate from the public, or extremely limited debate.



**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: If you happen to have a copy of the standing orders, you might want to take a look at standing order 23(c). I believe it prevents the current speaker from repeatedly referring to matters that have already been decided in this session.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** I would say to the members that I've been listening. I've been in the chair for a great deal of the evening. I have been lenient with all members from both sides of the floor.

**Mr Gilchrist:** I think Mr Parker raised this before.

**The Acting Speaker:** Well, to all the members, I am listening carefully. I will continue to do so, but I have been lenient in this debate with all members.

**Mr Grimmett:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Are you indicating that standing order 23(c) is not be enforced?

**The Acting Speaker:** No, what I'm saying to the member is that I'm listening carefully to all members debating and that I have been lenient with all members in this debate, because the entire debate is around rules, and I am listening carefully to make sure that the content of the debate has to do with the rules.

**Mr Wildman:** On a point of order, Speaker: I would just remind you, for information's sake, that this is the member who read his speech the other night.

**The Acting Speaker:** I don't think any of this is productive. That was not a point of order. Member for Scarborough North.

**Mr Curling:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay made my point very well. He stood up to try to tell me when I could speak and what I should speak. It is the exact point I am trying to make. I will speak what I want to speak, with great respect to the Chair and to Parliament. There are times you could look in that rule book until you die. The fact is, I will say what I want to say, when I want to say it. You can make rules until the cows come home. The point of view is that I will say what I want to say.

I might point out again, as I said, that Bill 26 was amassing all this power upon this government, feeling, "We have five years to do whatever we want." Then when they were caught on all this bully approach to things, when they were caught on this and forced to bring this Bill 26 to public hearings, the Premier stated in public, "Maybe we were really going too fast," and maybe that's one of the biggest mistakes he has made since he has been the Premier. That humbleness did not last too long. A couple of weeks after he said, "Maybe we didn't go fast enough." That's the arrogance we're talking about, "We did not go fast enough."

At times I have requested my caucus, when we go for public hearings, that what we should do is to make sure that we go into every part of this province. One of the most memorable spots I went to was in the Premier's riding. When I was up there we had a great gathering of people.

2230

**Mr Tilson:** All Tories.

**Mr Curling:** They could be all Tories, yes. As a matter of fact, most of them were Tories and they were embarrassed by what was happening at Queen's Park

with Bill 26, ramming it through. I remember a doctor there who said that if that's the kind of democracy that Mike Harris is going to have, they want no part of it.

**Mr Maves:** Bill 26 did not go to North Bay.

**Mr Curling:** The member for Niagara Falls said that Bill 26 did not go to North Bay. Let me correct him a bit again, and that's a good point too because the places they avoided, we, the Liberal Party and our leader, Dalton McGuinty, made sure we had a presentation of Bill 26 in North Bay. So when you said it didn't go there, it's another part of the arrogance again. Here is another part of the arrogance again.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Curling:** They felt that only where they go is where representation should be. But we go everywhere, wherever Ontarians are, whether they are Tories, New Democrats, Liberals and some of those who don't even vote — even Reformers who have slipped away from the Conservative Party. We have travelled many, many places where many of the Tories refuse to go. So Bill 26 did visit there, member for Niagara Falls, whether you like it or not.

I want to comment a bit about this civil disobedience that they speak of that I had done. I would like also to remind you of some civil disobedience that happened by Rosa Parks, gross civil disobedience on her part. She sat in a seat that she should not have sat in. Rosa Parks — one of these days when I have some time I will give you an education on that. But the fact is that civil disobedience changed the law and made sure that blacks can sit in any part of the bus because she had the civil disobedience and found it was wrong.

Muhammad Ali refused to go to war in Viet Nam and everyone was against him about that. He made a statement the other day. He said if so many people who loved him could just love other people, what a wonderful world it would be. I make the point because he himself, with civil disobedience, changed that law.

The Berrigan brothers, priests as you may remember, objected to all this nuclear warfare that was going on and of course were looked upon as civilly disobedient individuals. Again, today we have laws that govern nuclear armaments and are quite careful about how we administer those.

They said it was too much. Some of the members said they had to leave because — I presume all men are honourable men. All people here are honourable people and their conscience, of course, concerns them. Jesus Christ was a civil disobedient and changed the whole world. I presume they'll challenge me on that too. That's too much for them to take.

So any one of us here who has seen any law, regardless of the book, would want to say — I don't know if I can say that — that the law could be an ass. The fact is, if we find that wrong, we will object to that. So whatever law you want to pass here to muzzle us will not help, because cooperation is the order of the day. We need legislation for the people, by the people, not dictated by you, the Tories, or dictated by backbenchers in the back room of cabinet office. If the laws are not reflecting off the people, we in opposition will continue to object and we'll fight it in every way we can.



So I'm not at all intimidated by the fact that you are bringing in these rules here and saying that you will then restrict us, because you're so considerate. You want us to speak in 20-minute batches to give us all a chance. I will see the day — of course you will ram this thing through and pass it — that you will continue to put closure in, because when you multiply 20 minutes by 130 members here — and I hope that every single one will speak on the bill. We will see that, that they will speak on the bills as they come through here and take that opportunity and share it, because there is some legislation that some members feel they should not speak on, but we give our colleagues the chance to make most of the points. If a member speaks for an hour and a half, and most of our members did not speak, that does not necessarily say the members do not share the concerns and the issues and the support of what that member had said.

So regardless of the law that you may bring in today, regardless of the closure aspect that you will do, if it's civil disobedience that will make some sense to you and make that change, we will do that. A greater point that is going to be made is on the day when you're called to the people to justify the kind of dictatorship that you have ruled and governed —

**Mr Martin:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: The member is making such a cogent and important argument here that I think it's important that we have some folks in the chamber to hear it. A quorum please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Clerk, can you see if there is a quorum, please?

**Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Scarborough North.

**Mr Curling:** I'm so glad that the members are now gathering to listen to my summary.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** Not summer; summary.

**Mr Curling:** "Summary," not "summery." Summer is out of your mind. I know very much that the backroom boys can tell all the backbenchers here what to do, when to do it, and they do it so well, so orderly. But I must remind you all that while they can tell you what to do, they will not be able to tell the opposition what to do. They won't even tell me what to do. The fact is we will oppose it and we will protest and we will do the things that are necessary to get your attention. The fact is, as I was saying, that when the day of reckoning comes — the day of reckoning is the day when you go back to the polls. I can recall that lady in Ottawa who pointed to your cousin Brian Mulroney and said, "You should not touch my pension, and you have done so and I will remember you."

This was one lady who made that statement, one person. How profound it was when the day of reckoning came. The Conservative Party, which had the largest number in the House, was reduced to calling its caucus in a telephone booth, with only two members. They were reduced to two members because of the day of reckoning. Some of the time you over there all feel that the people are not watching, are not listening, but as you can dictate by rules in this House, they know that the power of the pen, that marking with the pen, that X, will mark you all

out in the next election. That's what I'm hearing on the road. That's what I'm hearing outside there.

**2240**

I know that for many of you here your mothers and fathers are not quite so proud of you, because I'm sure they did not bring you up in that manner. They have educated you to make your own decisions and to listen to people, but you have not listened.

I'm telling you, I represent a wonderful riding, Scarborough North, a riding that has been bullied by this government in rent controls, a government that has shown it can violate the rules any time it wants and the Premier will bail them out, regardless of what it is; a government that has shown complete disrespect for the most vulnerable in our society; a government that has taken 20% of welfare income from the people, and they come back here and say how grateful the people were because they took 20%; a government that has from time to time tried to muzzle us while they muzzle the most vulnerable, the disabled and all those outside; a government that has seen some of the minorities and has taken away some of the protections in employment equity and human rights; a government that has reduced its budget to the limit that people wonder, "Who do they represent?"

It's a government that said: "I am the friend of the developer. You have a friend now. I am a friend of power. You have a friend now. But those who are vulnerable, those who need the services to be protected by this government, have no protection because we are not here to protect those. You fend for yourselves. You lazy bums, you people who are on welfare, you people who are single mothers, you minorities who are unable to get jobs and are discriminated against, fend for yourselves. We call you special interest groups. But no, the developers and the landlords are not special interest groups at all. No, they're not special interest groups. They are the ones we will protect, because from the tables of the rich, from the tables of the privileged, will fall the food to the poor and they shall wait for the droppings to come from those tables."

**Mr Baird:** We are going to get out the red book if you keep talking that way.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services):** What happened to the land of opportunity, Alvin?

**Mr Turnbull:** Mandatory opportunity: Remember that phrase?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Sergio:** You got them excited.

**Mr Curling:** I know. I told you their mothers and fathers raised them well. Their conscience is bothering them. I'm telling you that the day of reckoning will come, my friends, that day when they'll turf you out and you'll be accountable for that. I will defend the rights of the poor as long as I'm here.

**Mr Martin:** I find it a privilege to get up and speak after such an eloquent statement on behalf of the poor and the marginalized and the vulnerable in our province. I support the thoughts of the member from Scarborough wholeheartedly. He speaks with compassion and concern and we all need to hear that in this place.

Tonight we discuss a piece of work brought to us by the government across the way which to many may seem



of some small significance, not very meaningful, not of as much import as some of the bills we've seen go through this place over the last number of months that amalgamated cities and amalgamated school boards and took away the rights of workers.

Nevertheless, this piece of legislation is a very important bill that we discuss and has tremendously important ramifications, because it's about hurrying up the agenda of this government, it's about giving this government the green light to move even more quickly than we've seen in the last two years to introduce change to this province that is by any measurement reckless, at best, and at its worst certainly not well-thought-out and not in the best interests of all the people who call this wonderful province of ours home and who choose to work and to bring up families here.

This government seems bound and determined to introduce and have its agenda imposed on the people of Ontario in a time frame that simply boggles the mind. Here we have in Ontario a jurisdiction that's the envy of people around the world. Ontario is the industrial heartland of Canada, a place that over the last 100 or so years has seen progress in a way that is inclusive and thoughtful and intelligent in many ways, and that progress was made by people such as ourselves, elected to office, working together in a cooperative fashion, debating issues, debating bills and taking the time that is necessary to make sure that those bills, those pieces of legislation, are in fact in the best interests of all the people of the province.

Now we have a government that came to power in 1995 that wants to turn everything upside down. Not only do they want to turn it upside down, but they want to do it yesterday, with no opportunity for the people who are going to be affected most by this to adjust, to come to terms with some of the new reality that's coming at them, and certainly no ability to participate in any positive way in what may or may not be some of the positive outcomes that will happen.

We know that in Ontario today we have an economy that's doing well, that's generating wealth and creating profit, but for a small group of people, not for everybody. The agenda of this government is making sure that those who don't participate at this particular point in time will never participate in any serious and significant way.

This government would serve even itself better if it took its time, if it slowed down, if it was a bit more thoughtful in the legislation it's bringing forward and took the time necessary to run it through the various systems that have been set up over a long number of years in this province to make sure that we do what's right, to make sure that we do what's in the best interests of everybody and that we do that which moves us forward in a progressive and constructive way, as opposed to take us back to a time when not everybody was able to participate, to a time when the wealth we generate was not distributed in the same way we find today in this province.

We talk about changing the speed at which we introduce bills here, because it is felt that will somehow make life better for all of us who choose to call Ontario home. I suggest this government will find out in short order that

what they think will be helpful to them and to all of us will turn out not to be as helpful as they first suggested.

I have here a statement by a member of the Progressive Conservative Party in the federal House not so long ago, March 1982, confronting a government of that day who were bound and determined to push through with their agenda and not respect the role that opposition plays in a House of Commons, not be thoughtful or mindful of the traditions and the processes that are put in place to make sure the pieces of legislation that are brought forward are the best they can be.

2250

**Mr Baird:** You are the best, Tony.

**Mr Martin:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

One Erik Nielsen, Tory House leader, March 1982, had this to say:

"There was of course outside pressure on us, and in the beginning many angry editorials about our obstructionist tactics appeared in the newspapers. But as time passed and people began to realize both the nature of the legislation and the unprecedented ploy the government was using in wrapping its proposals in this single indigestible bill, the mood began to change and the accusations of being the enemies of progress changed to recognition of our defence of the rules of Parliament."

That's what those of us on this side of the House who stand to speak here tonight are standing in defence of, the rules of the House of Parliament, because we know, particularly those members who have served here for a goodly number of years and those of us who have worked out there in the larger community in any way to make life better for the citizens who live in our neighbourhoods and who call the communities that we come from home, that a well-thought-out process that includes everybody, that takes the time necessary to hear the various voices, however discordant they are with the position that we ourselves take, is in the end a process that produces results that will be the best we can attain.

I remember myself back in the 1980s, part of the so-called 10 lost years, working as a member of the social planning council in Sault Ste Marie with a piece of work that the then coalition government, NDP-Liberal government of the mid-1980s, was bringing through to try and find an answer that would be helpful to those people who found themselves, unfortunately, in a situation in our province where they needed to rely on social assistance for their wellbeing, needed to rely on a system that would provide them the wherewithal to put food on the table for their children, to pay their rent and to clothe themselves and their children through some pretty difficult and long and hard winters.

It was a piece of work that was led by none other than Judge Thomson, the Social Assistance Review exercise. All kinds of people participated in that. I remember in Sault Ste Marie literally hundreds of people gathering in small groups and large groups to digest and work their way through all the issues that were out there confronting people, trying to recognize as realistically as possible the challenges that were there for those who found themselves caught up in the system in a way that wasn't allowing them to participate constructively or productively in their communities.



After lengthy debate, after much thought and work and effort on the part of all kinds of people from every community across this province, we produced a piece of work, a document that was quite lengthy. I remember trying to work my way through it. I remember, even more importantly, the fact that because of the effort that was made and because of the time that was taken to put that piece of work together, to put that program together that would have been a very positive and constructive approach to how we provide for those who are most vulnerable in our province, at the end of the day, because they were allowed to participate, because the leadership of that exercise took the time to make sure there were a lot of people involved, everybody felt they had some ownership, from the person on social assistance, to the activist who was working with people who were struggling to find a place in the community in which they lived where they could participate, to the small business person, to even none other than Conrad Black.

They decided this was a blueprint that they could work with, and so the then government of David Peterson, with support from the New Democratic caucus, began to move forward with an initiative that was complex, all-encompassing and fairly sophisticated but was moving towards creating a system of assistance for people that was going to be, as the report was called, a transition for them from being dependent to being independent to being interdependent.

That was probably the most hopeful involvement that I had up to that time in the struggle that so many of us who worked in the area of social justice participated in, and we were very excited about the possibilities it presented for people.

But in relation to what we're debating here tonight, if we are to pass what is presented to us, if we are to move forward with this time allocation motion which will see us ultimately coming back to this place in August to change the rules so that we move legislation through this place in a way that doesn't allow for the kind of participation that was there in the development of that Transitions program, we will not have good legislation, we will not have good initiatives to bring forward to the people and we will not take advantage of the potential that we have here in Ontario to provide for all the citizens who call this place home.

When the members across the way get up, they make a case that in fact they have provided more time, more discussion on very serious and significant pieces of legislation, than we did when we were in government. I would suggest if you took some time and sat down and looked at the actual time that has been spent on various pieces of legislation as they have worked their way through this place, you would find there's a very significant difference.

For example, Bill 7, the legislation that the present government brought forward that changes the environment within which employees and employers relate to each other in today's society: Your effort to get that through took 9.2 hours of House time in this place. Our Bill 40 — all of you will remember Bill 40 and the time and effort that we put into making sure that bill reflected in meaningful and significant ways the thoughts and the

feelings and the concerns of everybody involved out there — took us all of 25 hours of House time, 14 hours at second reading and 29 days in committee of the whole in this place. We took our time.

To the members across the way who got here two years ago and are in such an all-fired hurry to make the changes that they feel will be in the best interests of the people of Ontario, it would behoove them to take a look at the record of previous governments and what actually took place before you got here to move very significant pieces of legislation through this House so that at the end of the day they did reflect both the concerns and the challenges that brought these pieces of legislation forward in the first place and at the end of the process put in place something that was going to be helpful, as opposed to unhelpful.

2300

Let's look at a couple of other pieces of legislation and compare the kind of time we spent as opposed to the hours that have been spent by this government in bringing legislation through this place, just to make the point that where the members across the way will argue that they are spending more time per bill in this place, taking it through the various levels of readings and committee work and saying it is more than what previously happened in this place, you'll find is not the truth.

Bill 103, for example, a major piece of legislation they brought through here that was quite contentious: They spent all of six and a half hours in committee on that piece of legislation. If you look at our Bill 143, which was a very contentious piece of legislation — that was the piece of legislation we worked through this House that concerned itself with what we were going to do with Metro's garbage, if you remember — we spent all of 24 hours working that through the various stages of reading and committee.

Bill 103, the bill that unilaterally puts together all the communities that made up the metropolis of Toronto: six and a half hours at most by this government to ram that through. The bill we brought in, the effort we made to try and deal with the very important and difficult and challenging problem of what to do with Metro's garbage, we spent literally four times as much time bringing that through the committee process, taking it up north, having people come in and talk to us about it here, so to suggest for a second that you need to speed up what you're doing any more than you are because you're not getting your bills through as quickly as you'd like to flies in the face of reality.

You are, just by way of the two examples I gave you, Bill 103 and Bill 7, moving through the whole process we have set up here: second and third reading, committee, committee of the whole, taking it through the system at a speed that is probably a quarter of what we took, when we were government, with some very important and significant pieces of legislation through this House.

I would suggest that it behooves all of us to stand back for a minute and remember what government is about, remember that when you make change it affects everybody and that you have to consider, in making that change, particularly in a special way those who are less able to participate, who have less access to the levers of



power, who are most vulnerable to the kind of change you're wanting to make, particularly in the environment we find ourselves in today where we have an economy that is much more complicated and sophisticated than it has ever been before, an economy that is less accessible by ordinary workers in the communities we represent and come from — that we take our time, that we think this through, that we make sure in a global economy such as the one we're in that anything we do that we consider the impact it will have on all the people who live in our province.

We have here in Ontario a wonderful place that many of us were born in, a place that some of us chose to come and live in, for a myriad of reasons. Probably most important among those reasons is the opportunity that is there both for us and for our children to work, to get an education, to access health care when we're sick and to play and participate in a quality of life that is envied by the rest of the world.

When we see the wonderful province we have inherited and are now responsible for begin to fray at the edges, and where on one hand we're told by organizations as important as the United Nations that we are one of the best jurisdictions in the world for a lot of reasons, and on the other hand that we have a growing problem of child poverty, you have to ask yourself what we're doing that isn't quite right and take the time together, government and opposition, to work through some of those very challenging questions so that at the end of the day we put in place something that will answer some of those very difficult challenges.

I suggest to you that in the world we live in today, there are some people who will not need any help. There are some people who will always be able to participate. There are some people who will always see the opportunity and grasp it and run with it. I think that's wonderful and we should be encouraging that and making sure there's an environment within which that can happen.

There will be people who will work their way through our education system, who will take advantage of the opportunity that's there and find a place for themselves and be able to participate, but my concern is for those who will not be able to participate in that way, who because of the very complicated nature of the economy we find ourselves in, the very complicated nature of the society that's coming at us and the challenges we face, will have some difficulty.

That's where government has to play a very important role and that's where I believe government has to be very thoughtful and has to be willing to take the time that is necessary to hear all the arguments that are made, to hear all the concerns people have that are very real, perhaps not so significant to some who are in a hurry or are not able to see the everyday difficulties that ordinary people experience, but we have to take the time to do that. That's why government is set up the way it is; that's why there are the checks and balances at a place like Queen's Park and why we must honour that.

This place didn't just all of a sudden happen one day; it evolved over a long number of years as people struggled with how we make this democracy that we call government work for ourselves and for all the people.

When I came to this place first back in 1990 I had some ideas on what I thought I'd be able to do to make life better for people. I soon began to realize that there was a whole pile of other people here who had some tremendously valuable and exciting ideas too and that mine weren't the only ones, in many cases not necessarily even the best ones.

When I got together with other people and we shared our ideas and we pooled our resources and we respected the processes that are in place here that call us to take new initiatives to the public by way of standing committee, that call us in the House to listen to the voice and the concern raised by the opposition, we were all in the end better served.

We had legislation that was probably never perfect but at least a move forward, an attempt to improve the lot of another group of people who for too long were left out of the equation or who for too long found themselves at some disadvantage, who could now, because of the initiative of sometimes an individual member in this place, sometimes a caucus of an opposition party, more times than not the government brought forward a piece of legislation, a resolution, a regulation that, when it was processed and people were allowed to participate in it and it reflected the discussion and the argument and the give and take of that process, it became something that was very valuable.

**2310**

We brought to this place in the four and a half to five years we had as government a whole raft of new ideas and new legislation. Some of it was very good. Some of it probably needed some work. Some of it needed to be developed further. Some of it, perhaps we should have waited a while before we introduced it, because I think you can't as government ever be too far ahead of the people you serve in some of the initiatives you bring forward, because when you do that you stand the chance of people not understanding it and not being able, because of that, to participate in a constructive and positive way in the implementation of that particular initiative, even if it was designed to help you particularly. Nevertheless, we moved forward with that, and it was progress.

But within half a year to a year of the present Conservative government coming to power in Ontario, without batting an eye, without thinking through the consequence of rolling back some of what you rolled back in that first year or year and a half, boom, most of it was gone, and people were hurt, people were left without the supports they fought so hard for so long to have put in place that would help them participate more fully in the life of the community where they lived.

Because they are moving so rapidly, I don't think it has been well-thought-out. I think five or 10 years down the road it will become even more obvious that the biggest mistake being made by this government, above and beyond the impact of the actual initiatives, is the fact that they're not taking the time to think this through; that they're not taking the time to include more people in the conversation; that they're not honouring the process Queen's Park is, the checks and balances that have been put in place over many years by our predecessors, by very thoughtful people who were elected by citizens, the



same as we have been, to be responsible for the common good of all the people of Ontario.

To come as we have in the last number of days to this place in such an all-fired hurry to make the major changes you're suggesting that will affect in such a radical way the timing of the initiatives you want to bring forward concerns me, concerns my colleagues in the NDP caucus, concerns all the opposition in this place and concerns a lot of the ordinary citizens out there who talk to us when we go home on the weekend.

I say to the members opposite, you're going to have a few weeks off now, as we are, to think and to meet with constituents and to ponder the last couple of years as government. Slow down. Reflect. Think about this. We'll come back on August 18, and let's have a fuller conversation about this. Let's think this thing through. Hopefully you'll respect what we have to say when we come back. With any luck at all, if you respect what we have to say, we'll respect what you have to say.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Brampton North.

**Mr Spina:** You said that with a little chagrin, Speaker. I didn't know whether —

**The Speaker:** No, no. If that was what you heard, I'm very certain to let you know that was not at all intended.

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I thought you said it with both enthusiasm and reverence.

**The Speaker:** That's why I'm beginning to really enjoy the interjections from the Minister of Education.

**Mr Spina:** Thank you, Speaker. I really appreciate it.

I'm very pleased to be able to address the issues regarding these motions to make changes to the standing orders. I want to reiterate some of what we think are the positive elements of this, and then I'd like to follow up with some comparisons, with some of the comments that have been made endlessly from the opposition.

We talk about increasing accountability and efficiency in this Legislature, and there are a few points that will demonstrate that. We are looking at guaranteeing a fixed amount of time to debate the budget. We're looking at guaranteeing the budget debate within three weeks of a budget speech. As has been mentioned earlier by some of my colleagues, that has not been done in a timely manner in the past five or six years. It also permits the House to sit more than four and a half hours a day, plenty of opportunity for us to engage in longer debate on a per diem basis, and it permits the House to sit for more than 25 weeks a year.

Some of the rules we're bringing into place are really more in line with those of the federal House of Commons. We've adopted the House of Commons notice requirement for raising points of privilege. We're adopting the House of Commons rule on the rotation of speakers, and that allows more MPPs to participate in the debate. We're adopting the House of Commons time requirement for replying to petitions. We're adopting the House of Commons time requirement for replying to order paper questions. We're adopting the House of Commons limit to the number of questions a member can place on the order paper at any one time.

If we're adopting all these rules from the federal House of Commons, listening to the comments made by

the opposition I can only arrive at one conclusion: that the federal Liberal government in Ottawa is a draconian government that rams bill through. Is that the conclusion the Liberal Party is coming to? That's the only thing I can conclude, that if that is the conclusion they came to, it must be the case in Ottawa.

The technical changes: We're looking to eliminate potential disagreement over who gets the floor; clarifying that motions to have the House work overtime are properly moved during the motions sections of the routine procedures; clarifying the treatment of points of privilege to reflect the parliamentary procedure more accurately. Speaker, these are all moves that make your job easier, and we really want to help you do that: make your job easier. Very clarified, very clear on the rules of the House, so it's easier for you to make decisions. It also allows you more flexibility to be able to control the procedures in the House.

Another one is to fix time on voting on opposition day motions, motions of non-confidence and time allocation motions to a standard at 5:45 pm. We're confirming the existing practice whereby the business statement is not read if the business for the coming week has not yet been determined. We want to confirm that a bill reported from a committee may be ordered for third reading by a simple majority vote. We want to fix the length of debate on concurrence and supply so we don't get our shorts in a wringer in trying to pay the public service for getting their jobs done.

We want to reduce the size of standing and select committees. We have 13 people on most committees now.

**Mr Silipo:** Too many.

**Mr Spina:** The member for Dovercourt says, "Too many," and we agree 100%. In the past, I think the rationale, the motivation for sitting on a committee was to pick up the \$100-a-day per diem; that's the way MPPs made up their salary from the base it was. But it's now fixed. Under the new salary program we instituted in this Legislature last year, there is now a fixed salary for members and a fixed salary for parliamentary assistants, whips, House leaders and so forth. You see, there's no scrambling around to try to make a few more bucks by sitting on a few extra days of committee time.

We are at committee for very legitimate reasons, to be there for the purpose for which it was intended: to listen to the delegations, to assist in clause-by-clause discussion, debate, amendments and making the recommendations to the House. That's what the committee is there for. We don't need 13 people to listen to 150 delegations; eight or nine would reflect the revised size of the Legislature once the next election is complete, at 103 members; nine or 10 members would far more accurately reflect what we have in the House.

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We can make those changes now. Not only would it expedite proceedings in the committee hearings, but in addition to that, Speaker, and I know you'll be particularly pleased with this point, there will be a substantial savings of money, because then we'll only be schlepping nine or 10 members plus staff around this province for public hearings instead of the 20 or 22 we now ship around the province for public hearings. It's important



that we have public hearings. The question is, do we have to schlep all these people at great expense?

**Mr Tilson:** Is that Latin? What's schlepping?

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** What does that mean?

**Mr Spina:** It's a good word that means moving people around at great expense and under great duress. I think that's the meaning. I apologize, Speaker. I shouldn't engage in debate with other people.

We want to reflect the existing practice respecting the review of intended government appointments. In addition, nothing in this motion — I repeat, nothing in this motion — limits debate on any bill by one minute. The proposed changes allow for more democratic debate by permitting more debate.

To illustrate that, let me just look at some comparisons here. Let's look at the 1991 proposed changes, by the honourable member for Sudbury East, I might add. One motion that was proposed was no debate on tabling of committee reports; a five-minute bell. I couldn't believe it. No debate on tabling of committee reports.

Another one: speaking time limited to 30 minutes. That wasn't bad, but we just did one better here, folks. We have extended speaking time for the first speaker, limited to 40 minutes, subsequent speakers 20 minutes, and then 10 minutes after five hours. That's a far more democratic time permitted for speakers to speak than the proposed rule presented by the member for Sudbury East.

Let's look at time allocation that was proposed in 1991 by the NDP. It said, time allocation after a minimum of one day of debate at any stage of the bill. Let's look at the comparison of this bill. It says, time allocation after two days' debate at second reading. In other words, she couldn't even allocate the time after first reading, as is permissible.

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** They must be blushing.

**Mr Spina:** I think the opposition ought to be blushing, member for High Park-Swansea. They should be embarrassed by the fact that we have taken some of the recommendations but made them better.

It's always a pleasure to listen to the member for Hamilton Centre. He speaks so loudly and forcefully that he doesn't need the PA system in this Legislature. He talks about bills we introduced that were not part of the CSR, the Common Sense Revolution. Well, hello, folks. Since when was any government limited to just the one set of comments they set out in an election campaign? You govern as you feel is necessary to govern when you are the government.

Let's look at Bill 26. The member for Hamilton Centre and the other members from various ridings have been accusing this government, using terms such as "ram through," "trample," "draconian," "sneaky." Any others? "Anti-labour." "Anti-worker." But it's on the process that we want to address this.

Let's look at Bill 26, which the members speak about, the so-called infamous omnibus bill. The last group that was in government rammed five omnibus bills through; not one but five.

The other thing is, how many days did the Legislature actually sit to discuss bills?

**Interjection:** Nineteen.

**Mr Spina:** Nineteen days in the fall of 1994; zero in 1995. Furthermore, there was no budget in 1995, because they were more interested in trying to lose the election — sorry, they were thinking of winning the election. But the reality is that there was no interest in having sitting days, there was no interest in creating a budget to communicate to the people of this province how they were going to govern. They're trying to tell us now, in opposition, how they were planning to govern. But the reality is that they never did it when they had the chance. Why should we believe them now, when they're in opposition, when they had a chance and blew their opportunity?

The member for Hamilton Centre and the members from the Liberal Party pontificate on the fact that we do not have enough public hearing days. Let's look at the social contract. How many public hearing days did we have with the social contract? I'm amazed. How many? Thirty days? Twenty days? Ten days? Zero days: zero days of public hearings on the social contract, an omnibus bill unto itself because it covered so many ministries.

**Mr Shea:** What arrogance.

**Mr Spina:** "Arrogance" is not the word; it was dictatorial. I lost count of the number of orders in council that came down from the Premier's office during the reign of terror of the NDP government, an unbelievable number of orders in council.

They're talking about us being dictatorial? They're talking about us ramming legislation through? They're talking about us being draconian? I have never seen such a draconian government as the last party that governed this province.

The member for Fort York, my esteemed colleague —

**Mr Silipo:** He's not in his seat.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm not there.

**Mr Spina:** I can't say whether he's there; I'm not permitted to make a comment on the presence or absence of a member. But he is in the chamber, so we're pleased to hear he's able to hear the comments. He talked about how the ruling comes down from the Premier's office, that everything has the "M.H." stamp on it. He is phenomenally clairvoyant. He really thinks that everything comes from Mike. But do you know something? There are 81 other members — well, 80, with due respect and deference to the Speaker. The reality is that you cannot herd that many people —

**Mr Silipo:** Not by yourself.

**Mr Spina:** — by yourself. This is a Premier who sits through the entire caucus meeting, who listens to the comments, opinions and input of the members of caucus. There's no question that the Premier's office wants to and should have approval authority over anything proposed by the members of the government. That's the case in any government; that's the mark of leadership. The leader has to be able to govern not only the government but also its party members. You have to have that final step of approval whenever issues are proposed and brought forward, so of course the Premier's office is going to have a stamp of approval on it. Tell me Bob Rae didn't have that. Tell me that David Peterson didn't do that.

How about the draconian measure of the employer



health tax? In 1989, as the president of the Brampton Board of Trade, I filed, along with many other business people in this province, hundreds of thousands of petitions against the employer health tax. What did David Peterson do? Rammed it on through.

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**Mr Shea:** And the commercial concentration tax.

**Mr Spina:** And the other element, the commercial concentration tax. How could businesses survive, for Pete's sake? No wonder we're into a recession over the last five years — draconian measures of the previous two governments. If you want to kill business, that's the way to do it: steal from their profits. How do you think jobs are created? Government creates recycled jobs, business creates real jobs.

**Mr Marchese:** You guys are great. They're great.

**Mr Spina:** The member for Fort York is very entertaining in his speech and he thinks he's clairvoyant in being able to see into the caucus. The first couple of times I heard him, I listened attentively because the next caucus meeting I sat there and I tried to compare what went on in the caucus meeting versus what I heard from the honourable member for Fort York. And you know what? It's not true. The caucus office was not bugged. It confirmed my feelings that the member for Fort York is not clairvoyant and therefore his guesses are nothing but that: speculative comments on how this government is run, how the decisions are made within this caucus.

We were criticized about whether we should have this debate tonight or have it six weeks from now. Do you want to know the reality? It was a vote of the caucus that wanted it now, not six weeks from now. However, we defer to the power and the negotiating skill of the House leader with the other leaders. Therefore, here we are, folks. We're doing this part tonight, the time allocation. The actual vote on this motion will take place in August. Why? Because we work as a team. Even though we wanted one thing, we are perfectly understanding of the House leader to work with the other parties. We are flexible, we're willing to listen.

**Mr Silipo:** We didn't ask you to call this one today.

**Mr Shea:** You were asking for it.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** No, fair and reasonable.

**Mr Spina:** We are fair and reasonable and the reality is that we are trying to do our best. We're not perfect, we will admit that, but I think the proof is in the pudding when the population, including the former Premier, clearly expresses the fact that this government is going in the right direction. We are doing the right things.

**The Speaker:** Member for Nepean.

**Mr Marchese:** He's using a prop.

**Mr Spina:** The people have shown their approval in the latest polls released today. Clearly we are ahead. This government, this party, is now again the leading party of popularity with the people of Ontario. Furthermore, the leader that everyone so decries and who we admire as the lightning rod of this party is clearly head and shoulders above the two leaders of the opposition, and that's no comment on their height.

You want to talk about jobs in this province? How can this motion create jobs in this province? What we're

trying to do is expedite the business of government, put bills through that are better for the economy to be able to grow, expand and hire people. Isn't that called job creation? That's what I thought.

I'm really happy because in my riding Chrysler Canada has the LH platform car. They hired 250 people over this past year. That's only in Brampton. But that ain't all, folks. You know what? One hundred per cent of the LH production cars are coming to the Brampton plant next year, in cooperation and negotiation with the CAW. Good guys. And you know what? A third shift is going to be added, 1,200 more jobs in that plant. Those jobs are coming from the United States of America to Ontario. That's what makes us proud.

The member for Nepean talks about the Nortel jobs coming to Nepean, the \$250-million expansion, the 5,000 new jobs by the year 2000, over the next couple of years. Fantastic.

**Mr Shea:** We didn't get those five years ago.

**Mr Spina:** No. But I've got to tell you another story about Nortel which is a little known story. Northern Telecom moved its global headquarters to Brampton. They moved the switching plant out of Brampton to Belleville. The point is that they increased jobs in Belleville for switching equipment and production facilities. We lost 400 jobs in Brampton; however, they converted the plant into the world headquarters for Nortel and brought 600 jobs into the community. Northern Telecom, ladies and gentlemen, is an international, global corporation. They could have gone anywhere. They have a huge facility in Memphis, Tennessee; they have facilities in Europe; they have facilities in other spots in the US and Canada. Where did they choose to locate their global headquarters? Brampton, Ontario. I'm proud of that.

The \$250-million expansion, Nepean, Ontario.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Spina:** How do you pronounce that? Nepean, thank you.

These moves all work in concert. There is a plan, there is a strategy and it is working. Jobs are up, the economy is up, popularity is up. This government is doing what the people wanted. This government is doing what the people needed. This government is delivering on what it promised. This government is delivering in areas in which it didn't promise but knew that the moves that were made were absolutely needed for the betterment of the economy of this province. That's what governing is all about.

I'm out of breath. I'm very happy to have spoken on this motion.

**Interjection:** Tell us more. Tell us more about Nepean.

**Interjection:** Give him a glass of water.

**Mr Spina:** That's what I need.

While we're at it, we have announcements. Since we're on the final roll here, we have five minutes left. The member for Fort York would like me to continue and I'm very much looking forward to it. My colleagues have been kind enough to slake my thirst.

I just wanted to —

**Mr Silipo:** This is the benefit of having 30 minutes within which to speak.

**Mr Spina:** Yes, and you see, the point was made 10 minutes ago, so therefore I could have stopped 20



minutes ago, but because of this silliness of the rules that we have in this House, I can go on for another 40 minutes and 42 seconds, you see. That's exactly the thing.

*Interjections.*

**Mr O'Toole:** Recite a poem or something.

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**Mr Spina:** No, I'm going to recite a couple of comments Mr Bob Rae made:

"Harris Right, Rae Says

"I do believe that all that has taken place is necessary," Rae said at the annual conference of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

"There are limits to what all governments can spend, borrow and tax."

Bob, a message to you: If you had paid attention to your own message and your own thoughts, you might still have been Premier. But you listened to your own party, and there's where your problem lay.

Let's talk about a couple of other people here. I'm going to begin the quote:

"We are going to proceed with parliamentary reform. We're proceeding with parliamentary reform which will finally bring the Ontario Legislature in line with the other legislatures in Canada and the House of Commons."

**Mr Baird:** Who said that? Mike Harris?

**Mr Spina:** David Cooke, June 9, 1992.

How about this one, folks?

"When both the Liberals and the Conservatives sat in government, they were able to get, on average, about 30 bills through this Legislature. Why? Because the opposition parties allowed, yes, a debate to a certain extent and allowed the business of the House to go ahead because we understood, as an opposition party, when we were there, that the government does have the right to govern and at the end of the day it must put forward its agenda. Democratically, they have that right."

**Mr O'Toole:** Who said that?

**Mr Spina:** The man who said that? Gilles Bisson, the honourable member for Cochrane South, June 22, 1992.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Why don't you go —

**Mr Spina:** She's in bed. It's okay, Marilyn.

Here's another one:

"Bring in a reasonable amount of reform that puts a time on the speeches. Other jurisdictions, the federal House and other provinces, have that. We can live with that."

**Mr Shea:** Who said that?

**Mr Spina:** Steve Mahoney, Liberal, Mississauga West, 1992. Mr Mahoney has now taken his thoughts to Ottawa. Congratulations, Steve.

There are a number of other issues we can talk about, but it's important that the last quote be made:

"We have lagged behind. As the federal House and other provincial houses have moved on to bring in changes, this particular Legislature has lagged behind, as we have in a number of other areas. I hold this government accountable for not moving us ahead in a more timely fashion on these rule changes" — said in 1989 by Mike Harris, referring to the Liberal government of the day.

What do we have now? We have the opportunity to take the rule changes and implement them, make this House more efficient, more cost-effective —

**Mrs Ross:** More democratic.

**Mr Spina:** — more democratic and more accountable to the people.

The last and final comment is that many backbenchers, including myself, will have more opportunity to get up and speak on various bills. Speaker, that's just as important a point as all the others because the members represent their constituents, they represent their ridings, they represent in this chamber the people of Ontario. It's important that they have that opportunity to speak on the various bills and issues that come before this House in a timely fashion.

**Mr Colle:** I listened to the words of the member for Brampton North and I applaud him for his enthusiasm. I think he represents a lot of Progressive Conservatives or certainly Conservatives who are very happy and very content with what's happening in this province.

What is very evident too is that there are also many people in this province who aren't as pleased, who aren't doing as well as some of his colleagues are. There are a lot of people in this province who are not joking and are not going to bed with a smile on their face. They're going to bed without a job. About 10% of Ontarians are still out of work. About 20% of our youth are out of work. There are children throughout this province who don't have the food they should have, who don't have the housing that's appropriate. So it's not all, let's say, a bed of roses out there.

There are a lot of people in Ontario who wonder: "If things are so good in this province, why does government try to take \$30 million from seniors in pretending that the calendar went for eight and a half months? If there's so much money coming in, why did they have to try and pull that stunt?" That's why you need an opposition. That's why you need time for the opposition to raise issues, so the public can find out and probe and try to make, you might say, the government's agenda clear to people.

This government has an agenda and it has put forth a lot of bills. They may believe in their agenda and their bills, but the public has the right to know what's in the bills. The opposition can help make the public aware of what's in a bill. The public has a right to question this government. The opposition has a right to question this government. The public has a right to try and understand the implications of all your legislation.

Look at Bill 26, for instance, the size and scope of this. This is the bill you tried to ram through with a week of hearings before Christmas, on Christmas Eve. That's what you tried to do. You tried to pretend this wasn't going to affect people. Everything from the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, to some amendments to the Corporations Tax Act, to amendments to the Capital Investment Plan Act, to the Highway Traffic Act, to the Ontario Drug Benefit Act — this is where you brought in the user fees — the Physicians Services Delivery Management Act — this is about the hospital restructuring, all this was tried by your government House leader to be pushed through in a week before Christmas.



That's why the member for Scarborough North sat in his place and said, "You can't push this through without us and the opposition having an opportunity to question it." You didn't want it to be questioned. You said this bill had to go through without deliberate and detailed analysis. You wanted to hide something. It's our job in opposition to try and disclose and find out for the public what's in the bill. That's what the opposition is here for. You are trying to do more than you can to limit the opposition's role. You already have a majority of 82 seats. What other powers do you want?

**Interjection:** We want it all.

**Mr Colle:** Do you want every seat in this House? I think that's what one member just said, from Oakville. He wants all the seats. That's what we've come to, Mr Speaker: an attempt to take total executive control of this Legislature.

If I could remind the members out there, this is the legislative branch of the government. The legislative branch has a function to check the executive branch. The executive branch under Mike Harris has enormous powers. Three of your own members — Toni Skarica, Bill Murdoch, Gary Carr — said that you're bordering on the verge of being dictatorial. It wasn't the opposition saying that.

There's probably never been a Premier in the history of this province who's had so much centralized power, yet you want to give the Premier and the backroom manipulators even more power so that any bill they draft can be rushed through this House in a matter of a week. You can do two bills in six days if you follow through with the amendments you're proposing. You're trying to limit the opposition's ability to raise questions. You're trying to limit the public's ability, therefore, to raise questions. The questions that are raised are maybe sometimes frivolous to you, but they're not to the public.

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Case in point is Bill 26. Because we raised questions, you had to make 150 amendments to that monster Bill 26. You also tried to ram through Bill 103. You were going to do it even before the referendums were held in the municipalities because you were afraid to let the people know what was in the bill. You wanted to ram it through again, even despite the fact the public was trying to tell you, "We're not sure what's in the bill; we'd like to see what's in it." When you said you were going to do it anyway, the public got very upset because, as they found out what was in the bill, 76% of the people of Metropolitan Toronto said no to your Bill 103. But with your majority you did it anyway. You basically told 400,000 people you didn't care what they said. You did it anyway. Bill 26 you did anyway, despite all of the protests.

The question is, how much more power do you want? You've got 82 seats. You've got the ability right now to almost pass any bill at will. You don't even have to listen to the deputations. Look at the deputations that went before Bill 103. Deputant after deputant after deputant, except for the Premier's chauffeur, said, "Withdraw Bill 103." You still rammed Bill 103 down.

So don't talk about being the super democrats; that you are not. You may be a lot of things, but you do not like

to listen. You don't like to be questioned. You don't like to be criticized. You've got very thin skin. You've got a majority government and you want more power. You want to shut us down more. You want to pass more bills through quicker.

What are you trying to achieve? You're like the revolutionaries now gone mad. You're like the revolutionaries now in the stage where you have established the dictatorship of the proletariat, where you do away with all opposition and you rule basically at the hands of one person. That's what you're establishing.

What else are you going to do next? After you shut down the opposition's ability to question and debate, what's the next scheme that the backroom whiz kids are going to unload on this House? What other power grabs have you got up your sleeve?

You know why you want this power? Because you know you're going to do things that the public of Ontario won't like if they find out what's in them. You're trying to hide something. You're going to bring forward some bills, I'm sure, in August or in September that the public will not like, but you want to be able to push them through, jam them through before public opinion rises up against you.

That's what your motivation is behind this. We've had major rule changes in this province both by the Liberals and the NDP. Now you want to go to the point where the opposition is totally handcuffed, and you say, "We're going to do what they're doing in Ottawa or BC."

You're just cherry-picking. Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that in Ottawa there are two chambers, that even though something gets through the lower House, you can debate and the public can get engaged in legislation through the Senate, and that's been happening with quite a lot of regularity. We do not have a higher level or chamber here in Ontario. That's why it's so critically important to have a strong legislative branch. That's why the opposition has to have that role of questioning, because you don't have the second check and balance. Even in the United States the state legislatures are all bicameral at the state level, never mind the federal level. They have checks and balances.

That's what makes British parliamentary democracy one of the most envied systems of government in the world. It has a system of traditions and checks and balances. I know some of you consider this a lot of silliness and a lot of extras, but I'll tell you, this took hundreds of years to develop. These traditions of protecting the rights of the opposition did not come automatically. People gave up their lives, they gave up their careers. They were dedicated to parliamentary democracy. Going back as far as the 13th century, there was a lot of sacrifice to bring us to where we are.

What you're doing is trying to go back in a regressive fashion, limiting the role and the right of the public to find out what you're doing behind your closed doors. This government is becoming a closed-door government that wants to draft a bill and jam it through the Legislature before anybody out there finds out what's in it.

You're going to make big mistakes. We've seen the 150 mistakes in Bill 26. We've seen the massive mistakes



in Bill 103. They'll probably have to pass another five bills to correct the mistakes they haven't already.

When you have debate, the public finds out how they're affected and you have better government. It's a safety valve also. The public feels at least they have a say. Now the public is wondering, "How are we ever going to be able to question or find out what's in a bill if they can pass two bills in six days and even reduce the influence of question period?" You were even trying to shove question period right off the roster almost.

What is the rationale for this? You say efficiency and effectiveness. You just don't get it. This place is about debate. This place is about questioning. This place is about criticizing the government when they're wrong. That is what makes this place work, why it's worked all these years. You are now trying to go back and take away those rights and privileges that made our government here in Ontario and governments of its ilk all across the western world the prized democracies.

For your own expediency, you're changing the rules. Why are you changing the rules? Because you're losing. Because you want total control. Because you lost the battle for Bill 26. The public said Bill 26 was wrong. The public said Bill 103 was wrong. You think, "We can't let that happen again because we've got some other really bad bills coming up and we want to make sure that doesn't happen again." So the whiz kids in the back room try to figure out ways and schemes of doing it. They are unelected whiz kids. Who are these faceless people who are scheming up these ways of diluting democracy, diluting the public's right to know?

You should not be supporting any of these measures because basically they're denying the public's right to know what's in your bills, what's in the legislation. You don't want them to know, because once they find out they may oppose you, they may question you, and that's what you don't like.

You think you have a divine right to rule now. You think because you won the election, you've bought the business. Well, this isn't a business; this is still a parliamentary democracy, with all its warts and scars and inefficiencies. If you want to make something that's perfect, maybe you should go back to business. This is not about business; this is about a province that people own. It belongs to the people of Ontario. It doesn't belong to any of us. It doesn't belong to your cabinet and it doesn't belong to the Progressive Conservative Party; it belongs to the people of this province. As wrong as they may be sometimes, as wrong as the opposition may be, they still have the right to question you, and you do not have the right to limit our right to question you. That is what you're trying to do.

The unconscionable thing about these rule changes is that they have the audacity to say they need all the power. As the member from Oakville said, they want all the seats. They want a one-party system; then they would be happy. Then the backroom boys would have succeeded in taking control of something that is not theirs. You will never have all the seats. You will never own this province. It's not up for sale. You didn't buy it.

The member for Scarborough East is laughing as usual. He thinks democracy is a joke. He thinks this House is a

playpen for him. He doesn't realize the pain and suffering that wrong decisions made by his government can inflict on people. That's what they don't realize.

**The Speaker:** Mr Johnson has moved government notice of motion number 26. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 15-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2400 to 0015.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Saunderson, William
Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Shea, Derwyn
Brown, Jim	Johns, Helen	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Jordan, W. Leo	Sterling, Norman W.
Doyle, Ed	Leach, Al	Stewart, R. Gary
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Tilson, David
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	O'Toole, John	Villeneuve, Noble
Galt, Doug	Palladini, Al	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Parker, John L.	Young, Terence H.
Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas	
Hardeman, Ernie	Ross, Lillian	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Brown, Michael A.	Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony
Christopherson, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 43; the nays are 14.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

**Hon David Johnson:** Mr Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent that we deal with third reading of Bill 138, the road safety bill.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I don't think you're going to get unanimous consent.

**Hon David Johnson:** You usually put the question.

**The Speaker:** But it is past 12 of the clock. I don't put it on unanimous consent.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Come to order, please. Government House leader, please take your seat. It is past 12 of the clock. This House stands adjourned —

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Minister of Environment, you know the rules very well. It's past 12 of the clock. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock, August 18.

*The House adjourned at 0020.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

**Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston**

**Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell**

**Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers**

**\*Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller**

**Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman**

**Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark**

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b>	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b>	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b>	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b>	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b>	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé
<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b>	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Seniors Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (affaires des personnes âgées)

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b>	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, government House leader / président du Conseil de gestion, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	
<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	
<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b>	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	
<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b>	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
<b>Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob</b>	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b>	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b>	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b>	Carleton	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
<b>Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b>	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b>	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b>	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b>	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	
Vacant	Windsor-Riverside		
Vacant	Oriole		

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Administration of justice / Administration de la justice**

Chair / Président: Gerry Martiniuk  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: E.J. Douglas Rollins  
Dave Boushy, Robert Chiarelli, David Christopherson,  
Bruce Crozier, Jim Flaherty, Douglas B. Ford,  
Garry J. Guzzo, Peter Kormos, Gerry Martiniuk,  
David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Lillian Ross,  
Bob Wood, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Estimates / Budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Rick Bartolucci  
Rick Bartolucci, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson,  
Michael A. Brown, John C. Cleary, Ed Doyle,  
Bill Grimmett, Morley Kells, Gerard Kennedy,  
Frances Lankin, Trevor Pettit, Frank Sheehan,  
Bill Vankoughnet, Wayne Wettlaufer  
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Finance and economic affairs /**

**Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Terence H. Young  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Wayne Wettlaufer  
Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett, Isabel Bassett, Jim Brown,  
Gary Carr, Joseph Cordiano, Monte Kwinter, Tony Martin,  
Gerry Martiniuk, Gerry Phillips, Gilles Pouliot,  
E.J. Douglas Rollins, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**General government / Affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Tilson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Mike Colle, Harry Danford, Carl DeFaria, Ed Doyle,  
Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist,  
Michael Gravelle, Rosario Marchese, Julia Munro,  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, David Tilson, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

**Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Floyd Laughren  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Silipo  
John R. Baird, Rick Bartolucci, Brenda Elliott,  
Douglas B. Ford, Michael Gravelle, Garry J. Guzzo,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Frank Miclash, Peter L. Preston, Tony Silipo,  
R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Joseph N. Tascona  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gary Fox  
John R. Baird, Tony Clement, Alvin Curling,  
Gary Fox, Ernie Hardeman, Ron Johnson,  
Margaret Marland, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin,  
Sandra Papatello, Tony Silipo, Joseph N. Tascona,  
David Tilson, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffier: Peter Sibenik

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John R. O'Toole  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Trevor Pettit  
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Pat Hoy, Ron Johnson,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Gary L. Leadston, Rosario Marchese,  
Allan K. McLean, Bill Murdoch, John R. O'Toole,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, John L. Parker, Trevor Pettit, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffier: Franco Carrozza

**Public accounts / Comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Bernard Grandmaître  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Richard Patten  
Gary Fox, Bernard Grandmaître, Bill Grimmett,  
Helen Johns, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Murdoch, Richard Patten, Gilles Pouliot,  
Peter L. Preston, Sandra Papatello, Derwyn Shea,  
Toni Skarica, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /**

**Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Marcel Beaubien  
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Gilles Bisson,  
Tony Clement, Carl DeFaria, John Gerretsen,  
Ernie Hardeman, Helen Johns, Gerard Kennedy,  
Tony Martin, Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea,  
Frank Sheehan, Bill Vankoughnet  
Clerk / Greffière: Rosemarie Singh

**Resources development /**

**Développement des ressources**

Chair / Présidente: Brenda Elliott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Jerry J. Ouellette  
Dominic Agostino, David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh,  
Marilyn Churley, Sean G. Conway, Brenda Elliott,  
Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan,  
Bart Maves, John R. O'Toole, Jerry J. Ouellette,  
Joseph Spina  
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Présidente: Annamarie Castrilli  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Dwight Duncan  
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli,  
Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees,  
Gary L. Leadston, Lyn McLeod, Julia Munro,  
Dan Newman, John L. Parker, Richard Patten,  
Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.



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